

China Insights

Ning Fang

China's Democracy Path

 中国社会科学出版社
CHINA SOCIAL SCIENCES PRESS

 Springer

China Insights

Chairman of Editorial Board

Wang Weiguang

Vice Chairman of Editorial Board

Li Yang (standing committee member), Li Jie, Li Peilin, Cai Fang

Editorial Board Members (alphabetizing)

Bu Xianqun, Cai Fang, Gao Peiyong, Hao Shiyuan,
Ma Yuan, Jin Bei, Li Jie, Li Lin, Li Peilin, Li Yang,
Wang Lei, Wang Weiguang, Wang Wei, Yang Yi,
Zhao Dingyang, Zhao Jianying, Zhou Hong,
Zhuo Xinping

This book series collects and presents cutting-edge studies on various issues that have emerged during the process of China's social and economic transformation, and promotes a comprehensive understanding of the economic, political, cultural and religious aspects of contemporary China. It brings together academic endeavors by contemporary Chinese researchers in various social science and related fields that record, interpret and analyze social phenomena that are unique to Chinese society, its reforms and rapid transition. This series offers a key English-language resource for researchers and students in China studies and related subjects, as well as for general interest readers looking to better grasp today's China.

The book series is a cooperation project between Springer and China Social Sciences Press of China.

More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/13591>

Ning Fang

China's Democracy Path



Ning Fang
Institute of World Economy and Politics
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
Beijing, China

Translated by Wu Yisheng and Liu Aiyun

ISSN 2363-7579

China Insights

ISBN 978-3-662-47342-9

DOI 10.1007/978-3-662-47343-6

ISSN 2363-7587 (electronic)

ISBN 978-3-662-47343-6 (eBook)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015945501

Springer Heidelberg New York Dordrecht London

Translation from the Chinese language edition: China's Democracy Path, © China Social Sciences Press 2014. All rights reserved Springer © 2015.

© China Social Sciences Press and Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg 2015

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publishers, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publishers, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publishers nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made.

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer-Verlag GmbH Berlin Heidelberg is part of Springer Science+Business Media (www.springer.com)

Preface

Modern China, since the Opium War, has dropped far behind and suffered from attacks and bullies. “Inferior technologies, systems, and culture” become a prevailing cultural psychology among most Chinese. Changing the pattern that “China is comparatively weaker than Western countries” and reinvigorating China start from cultural criticism and innovation. Since then Chinese has begun to “open their eyes to see the whole world around” and learned from Japan, Europe, America, and Soviet Russia. We are in tension and anxiety for long, dying to get over from being behind and bullied and poor and weak and to surpass Western powers. As it were, in the pursuit of dream of power nation and national rejuvenation for the last century, we focus on understanding and learning but do a little even nothing to get understood. It has no significant changes even in the modernization evolvement after China’s reform and opening up in 1978. Such phenomenon is well demonstrated by a great amount of translation of Western writings in 1980s and 1990s. This is how Chinese perceives the relation between China and the world in modern times.

At the same time when Chinese is pursuing for the dream of power nation and national rejuvenation in modern times, they are also trying to seek for **DAO** to rescue from national subjugation and get wealthy and powerful by “material (technology) criticism,” “institutional criticism,” and “cultural criticism.” **DAO** is firstly a philosophy, of course, as well as a flag and a soul. What philosophy, what flag, and what soul are critical to resist national destruction and get wealthy and powerful? For over a century, Chinese people keep exploring and attempting in disgrace, failure, and anxiety and have undergone the phase of “Western learning for practical application while Chinese learning as basis,” the failure of constitutional monarchy practice, the bankruptcy of Western capitalist politics, and the major frustrations of world socialist movement in early 1990s, but finally harvest Chinese revolution success, national independence, and liberation, especially combine scientific socialist theoretical logic with Chinese social development history logic together, and find out a Chinese socialism modernization path—a path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. After the reform and opening up in recent 30 years, China’s socialism market economy has rapid development; economic, political, cultural, and social construction has made tremendous achievements; comprehensive national strength,

cultural soft strength, and international influence have substantially improved; the socialism with Chinese characteristics has made huge success; although not perfect, the institutional systems are generally established. China, a dream catcher for the last century, is rising among the world nationalities with more confidence in unswerving path, theory, and institution.

Meanwhile, we should be aware that the long-developed perception and the cultural mental habit of learning from the West constrain Chinese from showing “historical China” and “contemporary real China” to the world, although China has risen to be one of the current world powers. Western people and nationalities, influenced by the habitual history pattern that “China is comparatively weaker than Western countries,” rooted in Chinese and Western cultural exchange, have little knowledge of China’s history and contemporary development, let alone China’s development path, as well as cognition and understanding of philosophical issues such as scientificity and effectiveness of “China theory” and “China institution” on China, and their unique values and contributions to human civilization. The omission of “self-recognition display” leaves much room for malicious politicians to wide spread “China collapse,” “China threat,” and “China national capitalism.”

During the development process of “crossing a river by feeling the way over the stones,” we concentrate more energy on learning from the West and understanding the world and get used to recognize ourselves by Western experience and words, but ignore “self-recognition” and “being understood.” We blend ourselves into the world more forgiving and friendly, but are not objectively or actually understood. Hence, justice and responsible academic and cultural researchers should undertake the important assumptions to summarize **DAO** of successful socialism with Chinese characteristics, narrate China stories, illustrate China experience, use international expressions, tell the world the real China, and let the world acknowledge that Western modern pattern is not the end of human history, and the socialism with Chinese characteristics is also a valuable treasure of human thoughts.

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences organizes leading experts and scholars and some outside experts to write series of *China insights*. These books introduce and summarize China path, China theories, and China institutions and contain objective description and interpretation to modern development in aspects of political system, human right, law governance, economic system, economics, finance, social administration, social security, population policy, value, religious faith, nationality policy, rural issue, urbanization, industrialization, ecology and ancient civilization, literature, and art.

These published books are expected to let Chinese readers have better understanding of China’s modernization process in the last century and more rational concepts on current troubles, intensify the overall reform and national confidence, agglomerate consensus and strength for reform and development, improve foreign readers’ understanding of China, and create more favorable international environment for China’s development.

Beijing, China
January 9, 2014

Contents

1	Introduction: Democracy Takes Root in China.....	1
1.1	The Construction and Development of Chinese Democratic Politics.....	1
1.2	Democratic Political Path Adapting to Chinese Conditions	3
2	The Origins of Chinese Democracy	13
2.1	Historical Starting Point and Path.....	13
2.1.1	National Crisis—The Beginning of Modern Chinese History.....	13
2.1.2	Exploration of Three Consecutive Times for “Saving the Nation from Subjugation and Ensuring Its Survival”	15
2.1.3	Democratic Republic Path of the Revolution of 1911	24
2.2	National Condition Basis of Chinese Politics	29
2.2.1	Political System Built on the Basis of the Material	29
2.2.2	The “Aihui-Tengchong Line (Hu Line)”: Chinese Basic Condition Line.....	30
2.3	Constraints and Requirements of Chinese Conditions for the Political System	39
2.3.1	“Grand Unification”: Two-River (the Yangtze River and the Yellow River) Civilization Gave Birth to the Ancient Political System.....	40
2.3.2	Unification and Development: Requirements of National Conditions for Contemporary Chinese Political System.....	41
	References.....	46
3	Democratic Political Construction in Contemporary China	47
3.1	Create Democratic Politics Preliminarily After the Founding of New China	47
3.1.1	Formulation of the First “Constitution”	48
3.1.2	Establishing the People’s Congress System.....	50

3.1.3	Establishing the Political Party System with Chinese Characteristics	51
3.1.4	Establishing the Regional Ethnic Autonomy System.....	53
3.2	Historical Turning Point of the Reform and Opening Up	56
3.2.1	Setting Things Right and Drawing Up the Blueprint for Political Reform.....	56
3.2.2	Four Reforms in the 1980s.....	59
3.2.3	Establishing the Grassroots-Level Self-Governance System	62
	References.....	64
4	Characteristics of Chinese Democracy: Unification of Protecting Rights and Centralizing Power	67
4.1	Discovering the Basic Rules of Construction of Chinese Democracy	67
4.1.1	Confusion of Practice: “Democracy” or “Centralism”	68
4.1.2	Reflection on the “Cultural Revolution”: Balance Between “Democracy” and “Rule of Law”.....	71
4.1.3	Exploration of Reform: Decentralization or Centralization	72
4.2	Logic and Function of “Protecting Rights” and “Centralizing Power”.....	75
4.2.1	Both Aspects and a Unification of the Party and the People: Political Semantics of “Three-Unification”: Unification of Adhering to the Party’s Leadership, the People Being Masters and Governing the Country According to the Law	75
4.2.2	Protecting Rights: Mobilize the Enthusiasm of the People.....	76
4.2.3	Centralization of Power: Achieve Strategic Development	81
	References.....	91
5	Key Priorities for Democracy Building in China: The Development of Consultative Democracy	93
5.1	The Origin and Development of Consultative Democracy in China	93
5.1.1	“Three-Thirds System” and “Old CPPCC”.....	95
5.1.2	The New CPPCC Started the Practice of Consultative Democracy	95
5.1.3	New Development and Institutionalization of Consultative Democracy in the New Era.....	97
5.2	Historical Value and Main Characteristics of Consultative Democracy in China	99

5.2.1	Historical Value of Contemporary Consultative Democracy in China.....	99
5.2.2	Main Forms of Consultative Democracy in China.....	102
5.2.3	Main Characteristics of Consultative Democracy in China.....	104
	References.....	105
6	China's Democratic Development Strategy: A Gradual Increase of the People's Rights	107
6.1	China's Progressive View of Rights	107
6.1.1	Rights Are Historical Rather than Innate	107
6.1.2	Rights Are Given by the Society Rather than by the Nature	109
6.1.3	Rights Are Realistic Rather than Ideal	110
6.2	Real Source of the Progressive View on Rights	111
6.2.1	Nonlinear Evolution of Rights	112
6.2.2	Experience of the History of Political Development in the Countries in America and Europe.....	113
6.2.3	Lessons on Blind Democratization of the Developing Countries	114
6.3	Adhering to Taking the Path of Progressive Development of Rights.....	115
6.3.1	Correctly Grasping the Two Sides of Sense of Rights	116
6.3.2	Adhering to the Scientific Outlook on Development of Rights.....	118
6.3.3	Gradual Realizing and Expanding People's Rights	119
	References.....	120
7	Methods for Democratic Development in China: Driven by Resolving Problems and Advanced by Implementing Pilot Projects	123
7.1	“Crossing the River by Feeling for the Stones”: Reform Methodology	123
7.1.1	Two Ideas: “Crossing the River by Feeling for the Stones” and “Top-Level Design”.....	124
7.1.2	Specific Characteristics of Political Issues.....	126
7.1.3	Premises and Conditions of “Top-Level Design”	128
7.2	Problem-Driven Path Selection	130
7.2.1	Phenomenon Is Greater than Nature: Starting from Alleviating the Symptoms.....	130
7.2.2	Turning Small Victories into a Big One: Reducing the Costs of Reform	135

7.3	Procedural Principle for Pilot Program Promotion	138
7.3.1	Epistemology: Seeking Unity of Subject and Object.....	139
7.3.2	Trial and Error Method: Dispersing the Risks of Reform	139
	References.....	140
8	Outlook on Democratic Development in China	141
8.1	Factors Driving the Development of China's Democracy System.....	142
8.1.1	The Need to Check Power.....	142
8.1.2	Governance Ability Improvement	147
8.1.3	The Need to Combat Corruption and Build a Clear Government	150
8.2	Three Strategies to Promote Democratic Development in China.....	152
8.2.1	Expanding the Orderly Political Participation at Different Levels	153
8.2.2	Expanding the Scope and Improving the Quality of Consultative Democracy	155
8.2.3	Establishing the System for Check and Balance of Powers and Developing Democratic Oversight	156
	References.....	161

Chapter 1

Introduction: Democracy Takes Root in China

Since the advent of the industrial era, democracy has become the universal trend of political development. China is now in a historical process towards industrialization and modernization. Democratic politics is the inevitable product of the development of industrialization and modernization in China and is needed by the contemporary Chinese society. It will provide political guarantee for the development of industrialization and modernization to explore and establish democratic politics meeting the needs of the times suitable for Chinese conditions and meeting the requirements of the development in China.

There are similarities and differences between Chinese democracy and those of other countries. Chinese democracy is gradually formed in the long-term struggle and exploration for pursuing national independence, national prosperity and social progress. The historical and cultural traditions and basic national conditions have a profound impact on contemporary Chinese democracy. In the long-term and repeated exploration, Chinese democratic construction has gained its own significant experience and formed a democratic system reflecting fundamental values and universal principles of democracy, and the system also has Chinese characteristics. We call such democratic system with both universality and particularity: China's democracy path.

1.1 The Construction and Development of Chinese Democratic Politics

The construction and development of Chinese democratic politics takes root in the Chinese history and reality. Historical context and current conditions provide a starting point and foundation for construction and development of contemporary Chinese democratic politics; it is the decisive factor of promoting and building

contemporary Chinese democracy to meet the requirements of contemporary Chinese industrialization and modernization.

On the surface, democracy seems to be a “universal value”; it seems that “All roads lead to Rome”. The political systems adopted by most countries in the world today are similar in form and are called democratic politics. But, in fact, the historical reasons for the implementation of democratic politics in different countries are different. The roles of democratic politics in modern and contemporary historical development of countries are also different. In the case of the United Kingdom, the birthplace of modern democratic politics, the British democratic politics originated in the political struggle within the ruling group, therefore, it became the starting point and focus of British democracy to protect rights. French democratic politics originated in contradictions between internal classes and strata of French society and appeared as a result of revolutionary struggle of the lower classes against the upper classes. Therefore, the struggle for freedom has become the theme and distinctive characteristics of French-style democracy for a long time. American democracy originated in the war of independence against foreign oppression. Due to historical and geographical conditions and other special reasons, compared with European countries, the United States enjoyed more freedom in choosing and building its political system after it gained independence and was founded, so that many democratic ideas and political principles originating in Europe had better performance on the new continent than that on the old one. At the beginning of the establishment of American democratic system, civil rights and state power became inseparably interconnected, and this was the gift to the United States from the history. Thereafter, for any newly established country, rights and powers are rarely combined in an integral way, because they do not possess the same historical and geographical conditions as those in the United States.

“All roads lead to Rome”; all roads are different. The reasons for leading countries to the road of democratic politics were concrete and different. The beginning is usually purposeful; historical starting points and historical tasks were different, which profoundly affected democratic political path in different countries. The starting point of Chinese democratic politics was the crisis of national survival caused by the invasion of foreign colonialism. It was the historical starting point and logical origin of all modern political construction to save the nation from subjugation and ensure survival in China. In the struggle for saving the nation from crisis and fighting for national independence, the democratic political aspirations were produced and initial democratic practice appeared. After the founding of New China, it has become the new historical task to seek rapid industrialization of our country and establish a new prosperous country. Democratic politics becomes the political mechanism mobilizing enthusiasm and initiative of people for building our country and achieving modernization. Thus the theme of Chinese democratic political construction changed from salvation to the building of a strong socialist country. The historical starting point and theme have profoundly influenced the historical track and realistic way of development of democracy in China.

Enormous changes have taken place since the reform and opening up in China, but an important characteristic of Chinese conditions has not changed.

In 1935, Hu Huanyong, a population geographer, proposed an economic geographical boundary “Aihui-Tengchong Line (Hu Line)” which reflects unbalanced population and resource distribution in China. Nearly 80 years later, China has fundamentally changed due to the reform and opening up for more than 30 years, but “Aihui-Tengchong Line (Hu Line)” has not yet disappeared. Resource endowment is an important material basis for the economic and social development of a country. China has four resources at the forefront of the global market: human resources, market resources, water resources and coal resources. Regardless of human and market resources, water resources in China rank first in the world; the production of coal ranks first and reserves rank third in the world. China boasts these four resources, but they are inversely distributed. Most population and market resources are located to the east of the “Aihui-Tengchong Line”, while most water and coal resources are located to the west of the “Aihui-Tengchong Line”. The large-scale deployment of resources has therefore become the important characteristics of economic and social activities in China; and regardless of the specific situation, Chinese modern political system is bound to meet the basic national conditions. Chinese modern political system must have the ability to effectively deploy resources on a large scale and govern the vast territory, large population and extreme imbalance of resource distribution.

Democratic politics is the people's choice, but the choice is not arbitrary. People can only select in the possible space set by objective factors such as historical tasks and national conditions. Chinese history and basic conditions profoundly determine and influence contemporary Chinese political system. The fundamental task that contemporary China faces is to achieve national industrialization and modernization; Chinese basic conditions require that the political system and institution in the phase of industrialization and modernization must be able to mobilize and give full play to people's enthusiasm, initiative and creativity for building the country and pursuing a happy life, meanwhile it can concentrate the resources and wisdom of the people for rational and effective allocation of resources across the country; it also should defend national security and protect social stability and unity. Only the basic needs of both national and social development are met, can the contemporary Chinese political system be selectable and viable and be really needed by Chinese people; thus it is a truly democratic system.

1.2 Democratic Political Path Adapting to Chinese Conditions

After exploration for a long time, China has found a democratic political path adapting to Chinese conditions, reflecting the universal values of democracy and complying with the requirements of Chinese social development in achieving rapid industrialization and modernization finally. Compared with the democratic systems of other countries, the contemporary Chinese democracy path shows four distinctive characteristics.

Firstly, we need to strike a balance between safeguarding the rights of the people and centralizing state power during the process of economic and social development.

From a global perspective, the earliest democratic politics since modern times can be traced back to 1215 when the British Great Charter was signed. The British Great Charter is the starting point of modern western democracy. The core content of the Great Charter is the protection of rights. The rights of nobility are protected by setting the laws and institutions. The political practice created by the Great Charter has become the modern western constitutional system and parliamentary democracy after evolution for hundreds of years. The value of protecting rights is to establish general norms of social behavior in the form of system, and further form the economic activity expectation so as to motivate enthusiasm and initiative of the people for the production and creative activities. From European and American industrialization era in the eighteenth century to Meiji Restoration in Japan in the nineteenth century, and until the reform and opening up in China in the twentieth century, the practical experiences of democratic politics in human industrialization era have proved that protecting the people's rights can bring tremendous impetus to the development of social economy.

The reform and opening up has brought unprecedented economic and social freedom to Chinese people. Openness and protection of rights stimulated the enthusiasm, initiative and creativity of hundreds of millions of Chinese people for production. Under the conditions that resource endowment has not fundamentally changed, because of people's great enthusiasm for production, the economy has developed at a remarkable rate. This is the result of great social driving force of Chinese democratic politics. Since the reform and opening up, China has gained huge economic success and innumerable famous success stories have appeared. This is the most convincing footnotes of political reforms taking the opening of rights as the direction.

However, the protection of the rights is only one aspect of Chinese reform and opening up and democracy building. If right protection can be deemed universal in all democracies and is not peculiar to China, then the centralization of state power, the other aspect of China's democracy building, will be a unique characteristic of contemporary Chinese democracy. China is a developing country. Chinese nation has glorious history and cultural memory. Therefore, the industrialization and modernization of China should not only change their backwardness but also catch up with the international advanced level. "Chinese Dream" is not the country melody, but a great national ambition of standing on top of the world. "Because of the reform of the old system, dynasties of Xia, Shang and Zhou were able to establish a new dynasty; and five hegemonies were able to dominate also because of the implementation of the country's legal system different from other princes". If China would like to be the latecomer to surpass the former, she'd better not follow the footsteps of western countries. She must go her own way. From the perspective of democratic politics, another characteristic of Chinese path is the centralization of state power. The ruling position of the Communist Party of China (CPC), namely the leadership of the CPC, is the manifestation of a system of centralized state power.

The Chinese model is described as “authoritarianism” by Western public opinions. The so-called authoritarianism is defined as the combination of economic freedom with political dictatorship. Although many people in the West and even in China understand China in this way, it is not true. The system and institution of China are fundamentally different from the so-called authoritarian; the fundamental difference lies in that China’s current political system is not an arbitrary system for a person, a party or a Group’s interests; instead, the system strives to achieve industrialization and modernization through the concentration of resources and overall arrangement. In China, the centralization of rights is a phenomenon; the purpose of rights is the essence. The highly centralized political power and system in China is used for the strategic development of the country and ensures that China achieves more efficient intensive development. This is another essential factor of Chinese model and is equally important as the protection of people’s democracy rights.

Secondly, we need to identify consultative democracy as the key focus and main direction of our efforts to develop democracy during the process of the country’s industrialization.

Democratic politics is divided into “Electoral Democracy” and “Consultative Democracy” in the form. It is largely a Chinese-style classification method. In the academic circle of some western countries, in view of defects and problems caused by competitive elections commonly implemented in the West, someone suggests to supplement and adjust western political system by means of Consultative Democracy or democratic consultation. But these discussions are largely ideological and theoretical and are debated by non-mainstream scholars at the Salon. It is different in China; Consultative Democracy has been widely implemented for a long time and has become an important form of Chinese democracy.

Industrialization is not only a stage at which social productive forces gain rapid development, but also a period when profound changes and transition take place in the social structure. The process of industrialization has brought a lot of social mobility, identity changes of social members and wealth increase, which also causes a lot of social conflicts. Therefore, the stage of industrialization is a period when more social contradictions may occur easily and is often accompanied by social conflicts and political instability. The selection of political system has a profound impact on the process of industrialization and the society in the process of industrialization. Experiences in many western countries and developing countries have shown that competitive elections and opening of rights channels for social participation at the stage of industrialization may lead to “distributive participation”, namely, the social benefit groups gain political power through political activity; they change or impact the rules and patterns of benefit distribution through political power. Distributive participation intensifies struggles between different classes and groups, in turn leading to social conflicts and turbulence.

Focusing on the development of consultative democracy during the process of industrialization is one of China’s major experiences. In the process of industrialization, focusing on the development of consultative democracy is, to a certain extent, able to avoid the problems and conflicts aroused by electoral democracy and reduce the “distributive participation”. At the current stage, this approach boasts a number of merits:

Firstly, it can help reduce social contradiction and expand social consensus. Competitive democracy may cause benefit exclusion due to the effect of strengthened differences and “winner-take-all”. The essence of consultation is to seek the intersection of benefits, seek maximum “common divisor”, take care of the benefits of all parties and promote compromise and the formation of common benefits. This is the only method easing social conflicts and promoting social harmony in the period of industrialization transition.

Secondly, it can help improve the quality of democracy. Consultative democracy, electoral democracy and democratic institution with the decision made by the majority are not opposed and contradictory; consultative democracy allows various opinions to be fully expressed. Through discussions and exchange, various opinions can complement one another to avoid one-sidedness and should be as consistent as possible; it also can help unify the “subordinate to the majority” and “respect the minority”.

Thirdly, it can help improve the decision-making efficiency and reduce political costs. The premise of competitive democracy, ballot democracy and electoral democracy is the open competition and debate; this form of democracy has its own advantages, but it also has obvious weaknesses, which is the openness of differences and contradictions. Such openness makes the concrete problems become abstract and principle and it forms value opposition and moral judgment; the result is that the transaction costs for reaching compromise and consensus are increased. The consultative democracy is to seek common content while reserving differences, avoid sharp contradictions in the general case and do not disclose differences; their result is in favor of reaching compromise and consensus and reducing the transaction costs of compromise.

Thirdly, we need to gradually expand and develop the rights of the people along with our continued economic and social development.

The primary content of Chinese democratic practice is to protect the rights of the people and increase social freedom, but the realization and increasing of people’s rights and freedom is something that cannot happen overnight. The realization and increasing of people’s rights and freedom is a historical process. Development of democratic politics is the common pursuit of the people in the world, but many developing countries have suffered difficulties and setbacks on their path to democracy, with some even experiencing “democratic failures”. The intention of democracy is to achieve the ruling by majority; why the implementation and expansion of democracy lead to confusion in some countries? An important reason is that the political systems and institutions in these countries were unable to cope with such a dramatic expansion of rights. In other words, what was seen was the development of rights at an excessive rate.

Rights are historical phenomenon. Its realization is a gradual process. Perhaps the right is considered a priori and is innate from the perspective of the western rights, namely the so-called concept of “Natural rights”; some people believe that rights are given by the law; legal rights are sacrosanct. But the experience of western political development cannot prove human rights are given naturally. The Constitution of the United States is regarded as a classic of Western democracy. The Constitution in 1787 determined principles of sovereignty of the people and the

protection of individual rights, but in 1865, the Civil War era, 80 years after the founding of the United States, amendment 13–15 of the Constitution of the United States stipulated to abolish slavery and protect the rights of blacks. Another 100 years later, to the mid-twentieth century, American blacks still suffered from racial discrimination deeply. The rights given by the Constitution had not been realized. In “Little Rock” incident in 1957, the U.S. government had to dispatch the 101st Airborne Division to escort black students into the school. Until the 1960s, National Guard ever escorted blacks to take the bus in the United States. Until the 1970s, due to economic development, social prosperity, civil rights movement, student movement, feminists movement and other social movements, the human rights were greatly improved in the United States. Those principles determined in the Constitution of the United States 200 years ago were implemented in form. The historical experiences in American political and social democratic development show that the realization of rights is a long-term social process; the establishment of the constitution and the law is only a starting point rather than the end of rights; the Constitution and the law are a history of realization of rights.

In the ideology and social practice of China, the rights have never become sacred and absolute; the priori and dogmatic attitude towards the rights of the people have never occurred. From our point of view, the rights are a product of economic and social development rather than ideas. Rights neither come naturally nor can they be gained through political struggle alone; rather, they expand and increase constantly along with the process of economic, social and cultural development. Rights are in essence a historical and relative concept. People are only able to enjoy a certain right when the conditions that correspond to that right are in place. With the economic, social and cultural progress, China advocates to develop and increase the rights of the people and improve the quality of the people’s enjoyment of economic, political, social and cultural rights.

The rights of the people need recognition and protection by the constitution and the law. What confirmed by the constitution and the law is a social value standard; it is the recognition for the state of the society ought to be, but after all, the law cannot specify and generate reality. Implementation of the constitution and the law as well as the realization of legal rights from the text is a practical process. People’s rights are essentially the product of economic development and social progress rather than the product of law. Therefore, the fundamental way of developing the rights of the people is to take economic development as the central task and vigorously develop social productive forces. By promoting economic and social development, we can create favorable conditions for the development of rights and promote the further expansion and development of the people’s rights. This is one of the main reasons why China has been able to enjoy continued social stability in a complicated social environment characterized by rapid economic and social development and a growing public awareness of rights.

Fourthly, we need to target our initiatives in the development of democracy and political reform at resolving practical problems and seek to make progress by engaging in trials.

It is essential to implement construction of democratic politics and reform of the political system by means of the right strategy. After many years of repeated exploration, the important experiences in promoting reform by problems and advancing reform by pilot have been formed in China, which have become the basic strategy adopted by democratic political construction, and it is also another characteristic of the Chinese democratic political construction.

Construction of democratic politics and reform of political system are tremendous social engineering. Conceive from the ideal state, preparation and planning for democratic politics and system reform should be carried out in advance, and then be put into practice. This is also called “top-level design”. But from a practical point of view, it is often difficult to meet the conditions needed by the top-level design in the aspect of political construction. The top-level design requires experience and theoretical preparation. The foundation of top-level design is to have sufficient experiences in the same aspect and form scientific theory on the basis of some experiences. But in the social field, particularly in the political field, the repeatability of practical objects is low, and it is not possible to create a similar environment as natural science and engineering artificially. It is not entirely impossible to conduct top-level design and implement it in the field of political construction; and there are precedents in history, for example: the “Bill of Rights” after the French Revolution, the American constitutional system created after the founding of American independence; a series of political systems of New China by regarding the National People’s Congress as representative after the founding of People’s Republic of China. These are important “top-level design” and implementation of political system in the human political development history, but they all have the indispensable historical opportunity. This is the new historical starting point and development space opened up by social revolution. The top-level design of the political system is often produced in the revolutionary era of replacement of old system with new system.

Reform is different from revolution. Reform is the change and improvement on the original basis, not “making a new start”. Reform inherits many predetermined factors of the original system and is the change on existing base. Therefore, the reform must face the existing system, established pattern and other factors; it is restrained within objective provisions and cannot act in accordance with subjectivity completely. Figuratively speaking, the revolution is like “New Development Zone”, and reform is like “Transformation of Old City”. Different from the revolutionary era, the “top-level design” is rare and difficult in reform era.

Following the launch of the reform and opening up, China’s political reform strategy was vividly described as “crossing the river by feeling for the stones”. In other words, this is an approach whereby reform initiatives are based on practical problems instead of ideas, and in which reforms are carried out gradually through experiments and trials instead of a “package solution”. The so-called starting from problems is to set the starting point of reform to specific problems, starting from the phenomenon. Phenomenon is greater than nature. Reform starting from phenomenon will not deviate from the essence of things. It delineates the scope of essence of things when the essence has not been recognized; try reforms from outward appearance to inner essence and from simple content to complex content; achieve qualitative change from amount of accumulation by solving problems partially.

Reforms must be carried out gradually through experiments and trials wherever possible. It is also a successful important strategy of Chinese reform and democracy building. The political system reform and promotion of democratic politics have high risks and significant responsibility. Once a mistake is made in the political system, the consequences are serious, and it is even harder to remedy. Of course, it is impossible for the reform not to face risks; any reform will inevitably have to face risks, but the political system reform must not take the risk without retreat and the risk of irreparable consequences. Once political reform suffers a major setback and even comprehensive failure, the state and the people will bear irreparable loss, which often destroys the lives of several generations of people. This is the risk that any responsible political party, government and political leaders must not accept. Therefore, the political reform must avoid the risk that may lead to overturning of the regime and the country. All ideas, programs and experiments of the political system reform must establish a “retreat principle”, namely, assess the risks and prepare the return plans in advance, which serve as important measures of risk prevention. One of the purposes of implementing and advancing the construction of democracy and reform of political system through the pilot is to disperse risks. Pilots can avoid overall risks and disruptive risks, and it is part of the retreat mechanism itself. It is inevitable that some errors will be made during the course of reform, but we will be able to cope it as long as such errors are confined to certain limits. Failures and mistakes are part of the exploration and understanding; as long as they do not affect the overall situation, mistakes or failures may deepen our understanding of objective laws and facilitate our efforts to find more scientific and correct methods of proceeding.

Democracy has two aspects of value and practice.

The meaning of the value of democracy is the people’s sovereignty, which gets broad consensus and common confirmation by law in the world today. Under the conditions that the sovereignty of the people is recognized by law, democracy has become a matter of practice. As a matter of practice, democracy means to seek and establish democratic form and political system for realizing the people’s sovereignty. However, regardless of history or reality, in the West or in the Third World, it is not easy to explore and establish a democratic form as required. Under the conditions that consensus and political correctness of the people’s sovereignty are achieved, the specific exploration, selection and establishment of the concrete democracy form is subject to the constraints of historical and realistic conditions. From a comprehensive survey of the history of democratic political development in the world, we know democracy path is like a narrow way in the mountains, winding, bumpy forward.

This is also true with regard to China’s efforts to develop democracy. Chinese democratic political construction is not as smooth as that imagined in the future. The construction and development of Chinese democracy are subject to limitations and constraints of many objective factors, such as its own conditions and the international environment. In the foreseeable future, due to the constraints of many historical and realistic conditions, such as the stage of industrial development, Chinese

democracy building must not adopt the strategy of expanding competitive elections, which is an important limiting factor that Chinese democratic political construction and political system reform must face for a long time in the future. Under such historical constraints, our overall strategy in this regard should be to actively yet prudently expand and promote orderly political participation, to put an emphasis on democratic consultation and to establish and improve systems for the restriction and supervision of power.

Firstly, we need to expand orderly political participation on different levels.

Political participation is an important content of democratic politics. It plays an important role in Chinese democratic political practice. China's major approach to political participation is to ensure participation in decision making. That is to say, national laws and policies are established on the basis of public will through a public consultation system to seek and reflect the opinions of the public. Through consultation, the governing strategy of the ruling party, laws, regulations and policies of governments at all levels can accurately reflect and represent the fundamental benefits of the people of all nationalities. Multi-layered political participation is the key to ensuring the orderliness of political participation. In the modern democracy form, namely, the relationship between "elite" and "grassroots" is basic for the indirect democratic political practice to deal with. Although the political participation of the general public constitutes an essential part of democracy, the capacity of the public to participate and the range of this participation are restricted by the asymmetric information, asymmetric experience and the limitation of interests. Multi-layered political participation is the fundamental method to overcome and transcend the participation limitation of the people. The so-called multi-layered participation is to design and determine the subject, object and mode of political participation on the basis of the relevance of interests, the adequacy of information and the assumption of responsibility. On the basis of distinguishing between different types of political affairs, and by taking the relevance of interests, adequacy of information and assumption of responsibilities as the criteria, we guide the multi-layered political participation of the relevant groups and their representatives instead of advocate the so-called comprehensive political participation from all layers. In addition to guaranteeing people's right to participate in the political affairs of the state on an overall basis, this approach allows us to avoid the ineffectiveness and disorder that could result from such participation.

Secondly, we need to promote consultative democracy and enhance its quality.

The 18th CPC National Congress officially proposed the concept of Chinese-style Consultative Democracy for the first time, put forward the improvement of Consultative Democracy system and working mechanism and regarded the extensive, multi-layered and systematic development of Consultative Democracy as the focus of Chinese democratic political construction in the future. In an effort to develop consultative democracy further, we need to expand the range of consultative democracy and promote the development of systems and institutions for the realiza-

tion of consultative democracy. The key to developing China's consultative democracy is to enhance the quality of consultative democracy. A highly relevant task during our efforts to develop Chinese-style consultative democracy in the future will be to establish mechanisms for the discovery and reflection of public opinion in an objective, accurate and comprehensive manner. Relating to the development of consultative democracy and the improvement of its quality, this task should be placed on China's agenda for the development of democracy. Compared with electoral democracy, the expression mechanism of consultative democracy is relatively weak. Therefore, to develop consultative democracy, it is very necessary to accelerate the establishment of a system for the surveying of public opinion. Chinese social condition and public opinion survey has shortcomings and deficiencies now. The professional, systematic and comprehensive social condition and public opinion survey system has not been established, which leads to an unstable foundation of consultative democracy. In this aspect, China should learn from foreign extensive relevant experiences, combine the needs of national conditions and reality, accelerate the establishment and improvement of professional social condition and public opinion survey mechanism and system, especially establish independent professional, career-oriented social condition and public opinion investigative agencies to promote the improvement of the quality of consultative democracy.

Thirdly, we need to develop and strengthen systems for restricting power and conducting democratic supervision.

Under the condition that the expansion of competitive election is not adopted as the democratic construction policy option, rights constraint and democratic supervision have a more important position and role at this stage. The long-term political practice of mankind shows that the balance of rights, as the basic measure to prevent power from degenerating and to protect rights, is effective and reliable. The balance of rights belongs to the outstanding achievement of political civilization of mankind and is the generally applicable principle in the democratic political system. The basic principle of power balance is mutual supervision and restriction between the same or similar power subjects; and the basic principle of democratic supervision is that the consignors or agents are supervised and constrained by the authorized person or principal of representative. The power balance and democratic supervision are two inherently different yet functionally similar administrative mechanisms for restricting and supervising political power. Both need to be enhanced for the development of democracy.

China's future political reform should stress the establishment of a power restriction system in different power organs, on different governmental levels and at different power layers. The so-called "in different power organs" means that we need to establish a perfect power restriction mechanism in the party committee, government, National People's Congress, judicial departments and other main authorities respectively. The so-called "on different government levels" means that we need to distinguish central departments from local authorities and establish the distinctive right balance system in accordance with practical conditions and requirements. The so-called "at different power layers" means that China's political power will long

remain relatively concentrated due to the current stage of development and the limitation of historical political system at the current stage in China. Therefore the power balance of Chinese political system is not balanced and not homogeneous; the balance mechanisms at different levels of rights should be different from each other.

In the democratic types lacking competitive elections, the position and role of democratic supervision is more important. Especially under the condition of socialist market economy in China, democratic supervision, as an important form of democracy, is indispensable. Democratic supervision is the fundamental method of guaranteeing that various rights of the ruling party, state authorities and government agencies given by the people do not degenerate and ensuring that rights are used by the people and benefits are obtained for the people; in a certain sense, democratic supervision is one of the key factors of protecting Chinese democratic political development along correct direction at current stage. Only the effective democratic supervision is implemented, can other forms of democracy truly be effective; further speaking, only the effective democratic supervision is implemented and strengthened, can the nature of Chinese socialist democratic politics be truly reflected. Therefore, democratic supervision is an important field of the socialist democratic politics, with Chinese characteristics, needing to be greatly strengthened at this stage.

Democratic construction in China should start from current conditions according to the experiences. This is the fundamental way for building and developing Chinese democracy. Through its long-term efforts and explorations, China has succeeded in establishing a relatively systematic framework of democratic institutions that adapt to the China's current stage of development as well as its future developmental needs. Safeguard people's rights and centralize national power simultaneously; focus on the development of consultative democracy; adapt to economic and social development to increase and develop the people's rights; and promote basic strategies of political reform and democratic construction by means of the problem promotion and the pilot, which are the four basic characteristics of Chinese democratic political construction. We believe if we move forward along this path, Chinese democratic political system will provide a reliable political guarantee for Chinese economic and social development. China will eventually complete its historical task of industrialization and modernization and achieve the great rejuvenation of Chinese nation.

Chapter 2

The Origins of Chinese Democracy

Chinese democracy is the historical choice of the Chinese people. People's social choice is the unification of subjectivity and objectivity. Any social choice achieved not only is the result of the initiative but also is limited and constrained by objective conditions. People make a choice in the possible space provided by historical conditions and implement it.

All democratic systems of each country take root in their history and culture and are established on the basis of their specific conditions. History and national conditions play the important role in the formation of a democratic system and carve a deep imprint. To understand the Chinese democratic system should first focus on Chinese history and conditions.

2.1 Historical Starting Point and Path

Impact of the trajectory of historical development on the political system of a country is called “path dependence” of institutional change in politics. Understanding of Chinese democracy cannot avoid the modern Chinese history. The understanding and pursuit of Chinese people for democracy is obtained from their suffering in modern times.

2.1.1 *National Crisis—The Beginning of Modern Chinese History*

Open modern Chinese history, the most impressive words are “Save our country so that she can survive” and “Revitalize the Chinese nation”, which is the dream lingering in the minds of several generations of Chinese people. They represent two basic tasks of the modern Chinese society for national independence and social development.

The Opium War in 1840 was the starting point of modern Chinese history and was the most typical conflict between the industrial civilization of Western capitalism and agricultural civilization of the oriental feudalism. Britain was the most advanced industrialized Western country in the war; China was the most developed oriental feudalism country in the war. A small but powerful British fleet established on the basis of industrial civilization defeated the big but weak Qing imperial army which was based on agricultural civilization, thereby changing the trajectory of Chinese history; the modern Chinese history started since then.

The Opium War started from June 1840 in Xiamen and ended on August 29, 1842, when the *Nanjing Treaty* was signed by China and Britain on the British military flagship. The *Nanjing Treaty* was the first unequal treaty in modern Chinese history. The impact of the *Nanjing Treaty* on the Chinese history has two main aspects: Firstly, for a long time the cession of Hong Kong and jurisdiction given to British consular, the sovereignty integrity of China was undermined; Secondly, the “Ports of Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai were opened as trade ports, known as the five-port trade”; the Chinese original business system was abolished; “free trade” specified by the Britain was implemented. Sovereignty damage and free trade meant a weak country opened the “door of the house” of a weak party in the aspect of politics and economy. Due to the damage of sovereignty, the political protection for the society from the central government was influenced; because of “free trade”, the agricultural civilization of China was seriously eroded by British industrial civilization.

After 1842, the British Government forced the Qing government to sign the *General Regulations for Trade and Tariff of 1843* and the *Supplementary Treaty of 1843* in the following year. The western powers coveting China signed more unequal treaties with China by means of the opportunity of Chinese failure in the war. The failure in the Opium War, the signing of the *Nanjing Treaty* and a series of unequal treaties were a heavy blow to the Qing rulers indulging in the past glory, and they profoundly affected the future of China.

If we say that the first Opium War in 1840 just opened the door to China and started an era toward crisis, the Second Opium War brought the real political crisis threatening the survival of the regime 20 years later. In October 1856, the United Kingdom invaded Guangzhou by using “Arrow Incident” as an excuse. Britain and France started the Second Opium War by using “Priest Ma Incident” as an excuse in the following year. British and French troops invaded Beijing in September 1860. Emperor *Xian Feng* fled to Rehe Mountain Resort. British and French troops occupied Beijing, looted and burned the old Summer Palace. After the Second Opium War ended; Beijing was occupied; royal gardens were burned and the humiliating *Beijing Treaty* was signed. The supreme ruler of the Qing Dynasty, Emperor *Xian Feng* died in the refuge.

The Second Opium War caused unprecedented crisis of survival of the Great Qing Empire, meanwhile it also evoked the real sense of crisis of Chinese ruling class and literati. It started the reform and strengthening movement for the first

time in modern Chinese history. Modern Chinese history started from the political crisis caused by external pressure, after that, the Chinese political development logic has always been developed for resisting foreign pressure and enhancing the strength.

The beginning contains purpose. Aggression of Western powers brought two themes of “Salvation” and “Survival” to Chinese society. Look back at the modern Chinese history, since the Second Opium War, all major events, all major historical choices and system construction are related to two major themes of “salvation” and “survival” in Chinese politics. Those that could meet and satisfy the needs of “salvation” and “survival” were screened and preserved by history; those that could not meet and satisfy the needs of “salvation” and “survival” or were alienated from this were eliminated by history. The whole process of history shows that the choice of system and strategy are specified by the historical mission; such choice is a means to achieve historical mission. The historical starting point has the lasting influence on the development in the future.

2.1.2 Exploration of Three Consecutive Times for “Saving the Nation from Subjugation and Ensuring Its Survival”

Beijing was occupied; the old Summer Palace was burned and the emperor died in the distant place; these huge disasters greatly shocked the political elite of Qing Empire. They were the Manchu nobility, Manchu and Han bureaucracy and intelligentsia. Since 1860, the unprecedented thought and opinion appeared in Chinese political elite class rapidly. The keyword of this thought and opinion was as follows: self-strengthening. Since 1861, the phrase of “self-strengthening” appeared in the memorials, emperor’s edict and articles of literati frequently, which showed a sense of crisis of the elite and the strong desire for seeking the way to revitalization.¹ Soon the sense of crisis and desire for revitalization were transformed into the Westernization Movement starting from the political elite of the upper class.

2.1.2.1 Westernization Movement: Self-Strengthening Movement of Political Elite

Two months after the humiliating *Beijing Treaty* was signed, on January 13, 1861, the famous minister, Yi Xin (Prince Gong), grand secretary Guiliang and left vice minister Wenxiang responsible for signing in the late Qing Dynasty submitted a document of *Drawing up a Memorial of Six Regulations for Requiring the*

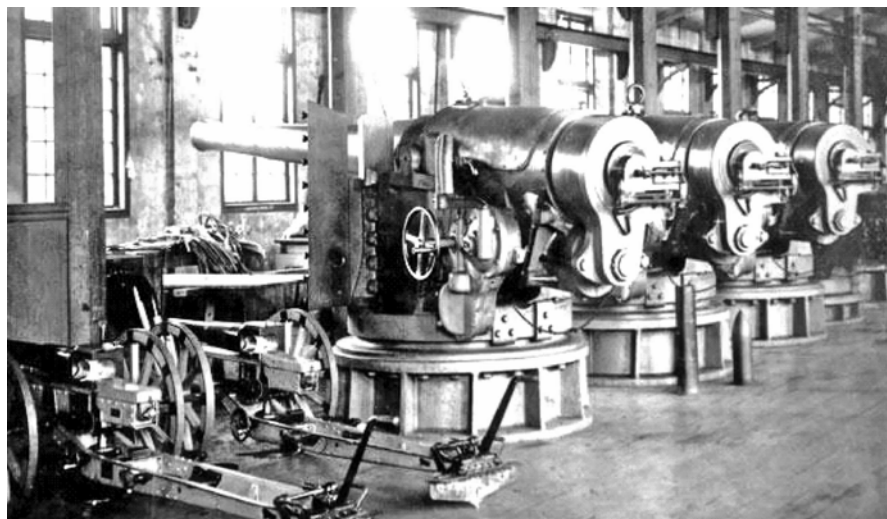
¹ See John King Fairbank (1993, p. 544).

Establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Others to Emperor Xian Feng in Rehe for starting the first reform and Westernization Movement in the late Qing Dynasty. Emperor Xian Feng approved the memorial to the throne, which was his last important memorial in his life. A month later, he fell ill. In today's point of view, this historical document is at best a proposal for administrative reform. But this document accurately reflected the insight of the elite in feudal dynasty then and also reflected the understanding level and basic ideas of the first reform effort in modern Chinese history.

After the second Opium War, under enormous pressure of survival from the outside, the Qing ruling class turned to the way of reform of self-strengthening through handling foreign affairs completely. The so-called "Westernization" was known as "Yiwu" in Lin Zexu era, namely all matters involving foreign relations, such as foreign negotiation, learning Western science, sending students to study abroad, purchasing Western weapons, military training, building factories and mines. The total starting point of Westernization Movement was "Learn advanced Western technology in order to resist the invasion of the Western powers" said by Wei Yuan, the friend of Lin Zexu. "Use traditional Chinese thought, culture and systems as the foundation, introduce and apply advanced Western science and technology" said by Zhang Zhidong, the important minister of Westernization Movement, further became the general guidelines of Westernization Movement.

Since the 1860s, the Westernization Movement regarding the establishment and development of government-owned military industry, government supervised and merchant managed manufacturing and light industries as well as government-owned infrastructure as its main content was started throughout China.

Strengthening the army against the Western powers was the direct purpose of the Westernization Movement. Therefore, the establishment of modern military industry became the primary task of the Westernization Movement. Jiangnan Manufacturing Bureau, Jinling Manufacturing Bureau, Tianjin Machinery Bureau, Mawei Shipyard, Guangzhou Machinery Bureau and Hubei Guns Factory, etc. later were the most important enterprises in modern military industry established in Westernization Movement. Besides these most famous military enterprises, local manufacturing bureaus, machinery bureaus and enterprises were also established in more than ten coastal and inland provinces. However, the military-industry was started late, developed slowly and had low levels. Because it could not meet the requirements of Qing Empire for establishing a new army equipped with Western military equipment and especially stimulated by the rising Japan, the Qing government established the most typical new navy—Beiyang Fleet equipped with Western warships as the main equipments through purchasing and introduction in Westernization Movement. Beiyang Fleet should be the most important achievement of the development of modern military industry and establishment of new army in Westernization Movement.



Jiangnan Manufacturing Bureau

After the Westernization Movement began, Westernization bureaucrats further realized that the military industries should be based on modern industry. So they proposed a slogan: “to be strong by to be rich” and advocated the establishment of basic industry and development of civilian industry so as to improve the overall industry level. Since the beginning of the 1870s, Li Hongzhang, Zhang Zhidong, Zuo Zongtang and Sheng Xuanhuai, as representatives, turned to establish modern basic industry and civilian industry. The first large Kaiping Mining Bureau using machines, Shanghai Machine Weaving Bureau and Steamer Business Bureau established by Li Hongzhang, Daye Iron Mine and Hanyang Iron Works established by Zhang Zhidong and Gansu Textile Factory established by Zuo Zongtang were the most well-known modern Chinese civilian industries.

After nearly 30 years of endeavor, the Westernization Movement achieved some results; the modern Chinese military industry, the earliest basic industry and civilian industry were established preliminarily. Besides the government-owned industries, Chinese private capital also developed. In the 1970s and 1980s, a peak of investment for new industrial enterprises also appeared. Before the Sino-Japanese War, 160 Chinese private industrial enterprises had been established. However, 30 years later, the first effort of modern Chinese history for salvation was interrupted by Japan-competitor; Japanese reform was conducted in the same period.

The Sino-Japanese War broke out in July 1894. The War ended with the victory of Japanese troops and the destruction of Beiyang Fleet. The Sino-Japanese War meant the bankruptcy of Westernization Movement lasting for more than 30 years, which caused

morale damage to the Chinese political elite, and they suffered complete loss of prestige. Shanghai newspaper publicly accused that Westernization Movement are “perfunctory attitude towards work; only waste money”. Due to the defeat in Sino-Japanese War, the efforts of the most progressive and most capable generation of political elite in the upper ruling class in Chinese society for saving the country were wasted.

2.1.2.2 The Hundred Days’ Reform: Reform of the Cultural Elite

The defeat of Westernization Movement indicated that implementation of administrative reform simply from the elite to grassroots and creation of government-owned industries could not save the country. How China would develop? More serious crisis further stimulated the Chinese society. The emperor and the gentry were very distressed due to the defeat in Sino-Japanese War. On April 20, 1895, the third day after the signing of the *Treaty of Shimonoseki*, Emperor Guangxu issued an imperial edict: “Subsequently Emperor and Ministers unite as one, get rid of the long-standing pain, try their best for troops training and raising military pay, prepare in detail and start reform.”² After the self-strengthening way, which regarded “Learn advanced Western technology in order to resist the invasion of the Western powers” as the starting point, failed, another major social force in Chinese traditional society-advanced people in the literati class appeared on the historical stage. Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong and Yan Fu were the outstanding representatives.

In the Sino-Japanese War, a great country was defeated by Japan with less national strength, which directly caused Chinese literati class to suspect the Chinese regime, thereby to seek self-strengthening through the social and political system.

Kang Youwei was the leader in starting the system reflection in modern Chinese history. In the third year after the Sino-French War, Kang Youwei went to Beijing to attend the provincial examination, but he did not pass. He submitted a letter to the Emperor to state national affairs that year. This was the first step of the outstanding representative of the late Qing literati class to participate in political activities. Kang Youwei required the Emperor to change the “Law of Ancestor” that had lasted for thousands of years and strongly urged to change the political system in order to seek the way to strengthen the country.

In spring of 1895, the metropolitan examination for advanced scholars was held in Beijing. The news of ceding Taiwan and Liaodong and reparation of 200 million *taels*³ of silver in the *Treaty of Shimonoseki* was spread to Beijing. The first-degree scholars waiting for results after the examination were enraged, and Taiwanese scholars even cried. On April 22, Kang Youwei and his student, Liang Qichao wrote *A Letter to the Emperor* with 18,000 words, which obtained the response of first-degree scholars from 18 provinces; more than 1,200 scholars countersigned. On May 2, led by Kang and Liang, the first-degree scholars from 18 provinces and thousands of people gathered at “Censorate” to require their letter to be sent to the Emperor. This is the well-known *A letter to the Emperor* in modern Chinese history. The letter to the emperor released the repressed emotions of Chinese literati class caused by the defeat in Sino-

²The Factual Record of Qing Emperor, Chung Hwa Book Company, 1987, Vol. 366.

³1 tael = 50 g.

Japanese War; it also brought an important opportunity for saving the national crisis for the Chinese cultural elite in its own way. Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao also became representatives of Chinese literati class in that era. Kang and Liang represented the salvation consciousness of another social class except the nobility and bureaucrats in late Qing Dynasty by relying on their vision of the cultural elite.

A Letter to the Emperor put forward four solutions in view of the *Treaty of Shimonoseki*: Issue the edict to encourage morale, move the capital to set the essence of the country, train soldiers to strengthen the forces and implement the reform to rule the country. Although the requests and suggestions of the first-degree scholars were not adopted then, the Letter to the Emperor made Kang and Liang famous, which created conditions for them to further promote the Hundred Days Reform.

After the incident of *A letter to the Emperor*, Kang Youwei focused on writing articles; he carried out a lot of theoretical preparation and conducted description and research on the paperwork of reforms in many countries in the world. In 1898, Kang Youwei submitted several books to the Emperor, as follows: *Japanese Political Reform*, *Political Reform by Peter the Great of Russia*, *History of the Weakening of Turkey*, *History of the French Revolution*, *History of the Partition of Poland* and others; he urged Chinese reform and innovation by means of positive and negative experiences and lessons from the reform and conservation in other countries. The difference between the national salvation advocate of Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao as the representative of the cultural elite and that of Westernization Movement was that Westernization Movement only limited the reform efforts to the materials, but Kang and Liang extended their vision and thought into the political system. They were like the cultural elite in Japanese Meiji era; and they realized that the rise of Western countries was related to western economic and political system, and even the ideological and cultural change.



Journals promoting ideas of the Hundred Days' Reform

On April 1898, Liang Qichao launched and established the State Protection Association, organized reformers and contacted enlightened bureaucracy surrounding the emperor; they tried to rely on the emperor with transformational ideas and ambitions to start the political reform and imitated the examples of Britain, Germany, Japan and other countries to implement the constitutional monarchy reform. The persistent efforts of the cultural elite reformers finally produced results. On June 11, as the nominally supreme ruler, Emperor Guangxu issued the edict of “Definite National Policy” and announced the implementation of political reform for “Making the effort to get rid of long-standing disadvantages” and rescuing the crisis. On June 16, Emperor Guangxu summoned Kang Youwei to discuss concrete steps and measures for reform and appointed Kang Youwei to be the secretary and the brainpower of the Reform; after that, the Emperor arranged Tan Sitong, Yang Rui, Lin Xu and Liu Guangdi to help the reform.

According to the recommendations of Kang Youwei, Emperor Guangxu issued dozens of new political edicts continuously in a short period of time, which covered all aspects of finance, economy, military, politics, culture, education and other social life; the important measures were as follows: advocate private industries, reward inventions, reform finance and establish national banks, reform the military system and train new army and navy, open channels for criticisms and suggestions, allow the creation of private newspaper and society, stop imperial examination and create new schools and so on. These rapid reforms were known as “the Hundred Days’ Reform” in history.



Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao

After the initial waiting, led by Empress Dowager Cixi—the actual ruler of Qing Imperial Court, the conservative forces judged that the reform started by the cultural elite would shake the foundation of the country, so they turned to oppose the reform. For saving the political reform in trouble, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, the important reformers attempted to rely on Emperor Guangxu and a few military generals to start a coup and forced to advance the reform. However, the cultural elite were weak in the political system in the late Qing Dynasty. Their only patron was the Emperor, in name only. Their desperate attempt immediately became an excuse of counterattack by conservatives. On September 21, the conservatives started the preemptive coup. Emperor Guangxu was imprisoned and reformers were killed. Except that Imperial University of Peking and the new schools in the country were retained, other new policies of the Hundred Days' Reform were abolished.

Since June 11, 1898, the Emperor issued the “Definite National Policy”, to September 21, Empress Dowager Cixi started the coup, this reform instigated by the cultural elite failed completely after lasting 103 days; it was known as the “Hundred Days' Reform”. Compared with political elite trying self-strengthening reform, Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao and other cultural elite had more profound thoughts, but they also were vulnerable. These cultural elite recognized that reform and making the country rich and its military force efficient must start from institutional change, but they extremely lacked social foundation and political allies. They did not even get the understanding of the enlightened people in bureaucracy and did not form the political alliance. Reformers thought naively that “if change starts from the ruling leader, it is very smooth and easy; if change starts from the underclass, it will be difficult”, so they blindly put the hope on Emperor Guang Xu to implement the reform for achieving a cheap victory. The failure of naive reformers is not only because of their lack of political experience, but also from an objective point of view, because they were part of the traditional literati class; and both the social conditions and their knowledge value of this social group would become obsolete; they would disappear together with the old regime.

Boxer Movement: Grassroots Salvation Movement

After the short-lived national salvation movement by cultural elite was transitory, the Chinese national crisis increased. From the defeat in Sino-Japanese War in 1894 to the Hundred Days' Reform, the interval was four years; and just another two years later, a gigantic national salvation movement arrived.

Due to the defeat of China in Sino-Japanese War, Japan obtained huge benefits through the ceded territory and indemnities from the *Treaty of Shimonoseki*, which caused the strong desire of European powers to carve up China. In November 1897, “Caozhou Missionary Case” happened in Shandong; two German missionaries, Franz Niez and Richard Heule were killed due to unknown reasons. Germany responded immediately. They took the opportunity to send troops to occupy Jiaozhou Bay and Jiao'ao (Qingdao now).

The northern China was invaded and occupied by Japan and Germany, which accelerated the process of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal society of China; a large number of foreign goods entered, and the commercialization of some agricultural products impacted traditional agriculture and traditional handicrafts seriously and destroyed the rural natural economy. The construction of Jiaoji Railway by Germany also impacted the traditional transportation industry. Poor farmers, unemployed artisans, boatmen and porters in Shandong and Hebei suffered from foreign economic and cultural exclusion, which accumulated strong xenophobic sentiment.

The people are brave in Shandong Province. They like to practice martial art for fitness. They practiced martial arts together and organized the civil society, collectively known as “Boxers” then. After the second Opium War, Western missionaries were allowed to preach and establish the Church in China. The differences of culture and customs often led to conflicts between the Christian Church and local people. Bad Christians often used their strength or power to frighten the people; frightened by extraterritoriality of the Church, local government did not want to go against the foreigners and could not deal with the matter impartially, which often caused Church incidents. After the Sino-Japanese War, conflicts between the Christians and the Boxers intensified in Shandong.

From 1898 to 1899, famine disaster happened in Shandong, Jiangsu, Henan and Hebei, which further exacerbated the social conflicts among the people; social order collapsed; uprisings occurred in Shandong, Henan and Jiangsu border area constantly. In this situation, Boxers and other civil society organizations in Shandong and Hebei gradually gathered and developed into Boxer Movement against foreign aggression and oppression. The Boxer Movement was largely composed of spontaneous, scattered groups, but in general they had a common tendency. The slogan of “Support the Qing, Annihilate the West” represented the political tendency of the Boxer Movement.

In winter of 1899, the Boxer developed to Hebei and Tianjin. In January 1900, Empress Dowager Cixi thought that “The feelings of the people can be used”; she released an edict supporting Boxers regardless of the protests of Western diplomatic missions. Zhili Governor, Yu Lu also changed the original repressive policy to support the Boxers. He distributed allowance to boxers and also invited the leaders of the Boxer Movement to Tianjin.

On June 10, Prince Duan, Zai Yi served as Yamen Minister of foreign affairs; he offered his sympathy to the Boxer movement and advocated to use them. Meanwhile the Boxers around the country began to enter Beijing. The largest number of boxers in Beijing was more than one hundred thousand. After the Boxer entered Beijing, they burned churches, expelled and killed Christians. On June 20, the German Minister, Klemens Freiherr von Ketteler represented missions of other countries to go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for protection matters. He was killed on the way by Qing ambush. The Western powers mobilized and organized the allied forces to intervene by regarding the incident as a fuse. On June 21, the Qing government formally declared war on the United Kingdom, United States, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria and others, 11 countries in total. When Qing Imperial Court declared war on other countries, it offered rewards to kill foreigners. The Boxer and Qing government troops besieged embassies of various countries in Dongjiaominxiang in Beijing.

In order to suppress the Boxer Movement and rescue besieged embassies, Japan, the United States, Austria-Hungary, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Russia organized the Eight-Power Allied Forces of about 45,000 soldiers. They entered Tianjin and Beijing in July–August, 1900. On July 14, the Allied Forces occupied Tianjin Zhili Governor, Yu lu committed suicide after the defeat. On August 14, the allied forces were close to Beijing; after 2 days of fighting, the Allied Forces occupied Beijing in the evening of August 16. Empress Dowager Cixi and the royal family left Beijing and fled to Xi'an when Beijing was occupied. When Empress Dowager Cixi left, she issued the edict to shirk the responsibility of the war to the Boxers and ordered the Qing army to exterminate them. The rapid development of the Boxer thanked to the support by the Qing Imperial Court partially. After the Boxer movement suffered brutal repression and attitude changes of Qing Imperial Court, the organizations fell apart in China. The Boxer rapidly disappeared. On September 7, 1901, the Qing government was forced to sign the “*Boxer Protocol*” to give a total of 450 million taels of silver as war reparations to other countries, known as “Boxer Indemnity”, which was the largest foreign reparation in Chinese history.

Although the peak period of the Boxer Movement was only three months and the movement failed under the repression of powers and treachery of Qing finally, the resistance of the Boxer against the imperialist and their struggle trying to save the nation from the crisis still have indelible historical merit. The imperialist powers realized it was difficult to subjugate China after they knew Boxer's desperate struggle and rebellious spirit. Although the Allied Forces obtained the complete victory against the Qing Court and Qing army in the military, they were frightened by the Chinese civil revolt, and eventually gave up the ruling mode of complete colonization, so China avoided the same fate as India, the prospect of complete colonization.

Compared to the instigators of the Westernization Movement and the Hundred Days' Reform, the instigators and participants of the Boxer Movement were more complex. On the whole, the participants of the Boxer Movement belonged to the underclass of Chinese society then. According to the class background analysis of 89 leaders of the Boxer Movement in Shandong Province, the main Boxer participants were farmers, artisans and small traders. Specific proportion is as follows: farmers: 38.2 %, sharecroppers and farm laborers: 24.7 %, traders: 5.6 %, artisans: 4.5 %, wanderers: 3.4 %, veterinaries and performers accounted for 1.1 % respectively. In addition, landowners accounted for 22.5 % (Kong Lingren 1980). So about 80 % of the participants were laborers of the underclass.

Westernization Movement, Hundred Days' Reform and Boxer Movement were three national salvation movements started by different social groups under the historical conditions that China suffered aggression of imperialism and colonialism and faced grave national crisis in late Chinese feudal society. Westernization Movement was the self-strengthening Movement of political elite. The Hundred Days' Reform was the efforts of the cultural elite to save the country. Compared with them, the Boxer Movement was a resistance and self-help grassroots movement. The political and cultural elite controlled the economic, political and cultural resources of Chinese society and were undertakers of social responsibility in the traditional society. However, an era of declining society was also the decline of its elite era. The practice proved that the elite in late

Chinese feudal society did not have the ability to save the crisis of society, even the ability to change and save themselves. When there was no way, the laborers of the underclass, without the ability and legal liability, came forward to seek a way out of the nation and society by their own survival instinct and resolute resistance spirit. Of course, due to its loose organization and spontaneity, the Boxer Movement could not form a unified definite ideological agenda and action goal. Boxer's basic political tendency was to maintain the traditional social structure, production mode, lifestyle and cultural tradition, and the ideological tendency showed in practice belonged to the social advocate of populism. Obviously populism could not become the norm of society at any time in history. In the national crisis in the late nineteenth century, populism also played the role of the rebel, but it could not become the builder.

Instigators and participants of Boxer Movement, the Hundred Days' Reform and the previous Westernization Movement were the three most important social groups in traditional Chinese society. The problems they faced were the same essentially, namely to rescue the national crisis, which needed to find a new way and to establish a new political system and social model. However, the late Qing Dynasty society did not have the same social conditions as those of Japanese Meiji Restoration; they missed the historical opportunity to save the crisis through social improvement. When the efforts of all three Groups for rescuing and transforming China failed in accordance with their own will and way, the historical task of national salvation pushed China to the social revolution.

2.1.3 Democratic Republic Path of the Revolution of 1911

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the door of China was opened; the process of colonization was deepened; Chinese economic and social structure also changed gradually; the development of business and trade made the new social class develop and increase gradually, such as industrialists, businessmen and others, especially in the southeast coast and regions in Guangdong adjacent to Hong Kong and Macao. Industry and commerce and overseas trades developed greatly; the social status of businessmen and traders was gradually improved.

In June 1894, the Korean Peninsula was under the clouds of war; Sino-Japanese war was imminent. A young doctor with full national salvation aspiring came to Tianjin alone to try to visit Zhili Governor, Beiyang Minister Li Hongzhang. Since the beginning of that year, he carefully wrote a national salvation improvement program of thousands of words; he hoped the Qing government could adopt so as to achieve his patriotic ideals. The young doctor was the famous great forerunner of Chinese democratic revolution, Sun Yat-sen. However, Minister Li Hongzhang was busy with military affairs; he had no good mood to have an interview with the unknown young man and listened to his theory of "One can maximize his talent, land can be used fully, materials can be utilized completely and goods can be transported smoothly".

After Sun Yat-sen left sadly, the Sino-Japanese War broke out. On November 21 of the year, the Japanese occupied the strategic Port Arthur and obtained a decisive

victory since the war began. Three days after the Japanese occupied Port Arthur, Sun Yat-sen established the Revive China Society in Honolulu in the United States; he prepared to start a revolution to save China.⁴ The personal transformation of Sun Yat-sen (from the hope of a letter to the Emperor to organizing political party for starting the revolution), to a certain extent, showed the transformation of Chinese era; the improvement way and the rescuing way from the inside had been cut off; revolution must be implemented for saving the nation.

In 1900, the first year of the twentieth century, the Eight-Power Allied Forces occupied Beijing. Chinese people entered a new century in the grave national crisis. How would China develop? It became the extreme difficult problem that the nation faced and must answer. Three failed attempts to self-rescue by three Groups in Chinese traditional society put forward the requirements of implementing a more radical thorough reform in Chinese history. The social forces for continuing the salvation movement became new social forces gradually. They were the businessmen and local forces in the south.

After China was opened forcibly by Western powers, a large number of overseas Chinese made a living around the world. What was different from people's imagination was although overseas Chinese lived abroad for many years, they were concerned about their motherland. Especially in the era when Chinese nation was poor, weak and backward and was bullied, many of overseas Chinese expected to change the destiny of their motherland, and they provided resolute support for motherland in the revolutionary struggle later. Until the early twentieth century, some social classes and social forces against imperialism and feudalism and advocating Western-style democratic republic path gathered in China, especially in the south. These social forces mainly included three social classes and groups: businessmen, local forces and overseas Chinese. Although overseas Chinese lived abroad, they were the most important supporters of the early revolution indeed. Many of them also returned home to participate in the uprising and directly participated in the revolutionary struggle. So Sun Yat-sen once said: Overseas Chinese are the mother of the revolution.

In August 1905, Sun Yat-sen, Huang Xing and others established the national revolutionary party – Chinese Revolutionary League in Tokyo based on Revive China Society, Society for the Revival of China and other revolutionary groups. Sun Yat-sen was elected Prime Minister. He put forward the political program of “Get rid of the Manchus, restore China, establish the Republic of China, and equalize land ownership”; advocate to overthrow the Manchu rule and the feudal autocracy by revolution; establish a Western-style democratic republican system and achieve the social transformation in China. Shortly after that, in the foreword of the official newspaper *People Newspaper* of the China Revival League, Sun Yat-sen first proposed “Three Principles of the People”, namely nationalism, democracy and the livelihood of the people, which laid the theoretical foundation for the advocated democratic republic system.

⁴Record of date of founding of the Revive China Society is not discovered; here, the formulation of the *Constitution of the Revive China Society* by Sun Yat-sen and payment of membership fees by the first batch of members were regarded as the standard.

The establishment of Chinese Revolutionary League marked the starting of the revolutionary movement. On the one hand, the Chinese Revolutionary League continued to organize the armed movements dominated by League members; on the other hand, it mainly conducted revolutionary propaganda and liaison in the southern region and attempted to launch broader revolutions. After the efforts for a long time and attempts of uprising several times, on October 10, 1911, Wuchang Uprising succeeded. The uprising was launched by the Progressive Society and the Literary Society; and Hubei Military government was organized with the help of the League. As the Wuchang Uprising started, precarious Qing Empire disintegrated immediately. In a month, Jiangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangdong, Guangxi, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Anhui, Fujian and other southern provinces declared independence.

After Wuchang Uprising succeeded and the main southern provinces declared independence, the Qing Imperial Court appointed Yuan Shikai again, the retired leader of Beiyang Army; they fought against the southern revolutionaries by using the Beiyang Army as the main force and the residual forces loyal to the imperial court in the south. On the one hand, Yuan Shikai took advantage of the situation to send troops to Wuhan, meanwhile consolidated the forces in the north; on the other hand, by means of the independence of southern provinces, he forced the Qing government to hand over the power. After the conflict between the North and the South for a short period of time, on 18 December, the “South–north Negotiation” was held in Shanghai, in which, one party was the “Provincial Governor Representative Association” by regarding the southern provinces as the main part; the other party was the Beiyang Army representatives of Yuan Shikai. On December 25, Sun Yat-sen returned to China. On December 29, provisional presidential election was conducted at the conference held by representatives from 17 provinces; Sun Yat-sen was elected the provisional president of the Republic of China.



Sun Yat-sen, Chinese democratic revolution forerunner

On January 1, 1912, Sun Yat-sen was sworn in as interim president in Nanjing; the Republic of China was proclaimed. The founding ended the ruling of Qing Dynasty for 260 years and Chinese feudal autocracy for 2000 years. Although the victory of the Revolution of 1911 and the founding of the Republic of China changed the form of Chinese government, it did not change the political structure of Chinese society. Sun Yat-sen just became provisional president; Yuan Shikai had a large number of troops and controlled the North; he requested the resignation of Sun Yat-sen by forcing the abdication of the Qing as the exchange. On February 12, Qing emperor Xuantong abdicated, two days later, Sun Yat-sen was forced to resign. On February 15, Yuan Shikai was elected provisional president by the Senate. Then the interim government of the Republic of China established for only three months declared its dissolution in Nanjing. The Revolution of 1911 also ended.

After the Revolution of 1911 ended, Chinese revolutionaries were extremely disappointed and negative. Sun Yat-sen strived for revolution in his life; he had to admit: the situation then was “Revolutionaries were depressed and close to emotional breakdown; after the failure, they left successively; three hibiscus islands became the concentrated place for desperate losers; disagreement occurred as future career was talked about; or they remained silent not to talk about revolution, or they expected that the revolution will appeared in ten years, they were disappointed; insulted each other; it was difficult for revolutionary spirit and groups with twenty years to recover” (Sun Yat-sen 1981, p. 112). Westernization Movement, the Hundred Days’ Reform and Boxer Movement failed due to their weakness of the strength they relied on and because they could not transform the traditional Chinese social system. Compared with them, why couldn’t the Revolution of 1911 and the revolutionaries complete its historical mission by means of the overthrowing of the old regime and carrying out social revolution as the purpose? The main reasons were as follows:

(a) The Revolution of 1911 Was the Limited Constitutional System Revolution

The Revolution established the democratic regime formally, but it did not achieve the actual result of the establishment of democratic politics through revolution. In the early years of the Republic of China, people had noticed the phenomenon of “Dissolution of the Revolutionary Party upon Foundation of the Revolutionary Army” (Sun Yat-sen 2011, p. 1). Why didn’t the Revolution establish a new system that it sought and complete the historical task of salvation and revitalization of the country? The direct reason was that the Revolution of 1911 only changed the form of the Chinese political system, but it did not change the political power structure of the Chinese political system; namely it did not shake the main social classes and groups controlling the actual rights; it did not change the practical modes and rules for achieving political power by Chinese society. After the Revolution of 1911, Beiyang warlords, local warlords and the landlord gentry class controlled the Chinese real political power; they mainly depended on the landlord gentry class. Due to this political power structure, Chinese society was in an era of fragmentation and warlordism after the

Revolution of 1911 and in the coming decades. Therefore, the Revolution changed the structure of the outermost layer of the political system—the constitutional system, namely constitution, law and government agencies of a country. After the Revolution of 1911, the Republic of China was established; constitution was created; the so-called democratic republic regime was established to implement elections and separation of powers by imitating Western countries. But under the surface constitutional system, the political power did not have any substantial change in China. Thus, as Lu Xun said, only “The situation is in turmoil, one warlord seizes power today; and the other one tomorrow”.

(b) Chinese Traditional Social Structure Did Not Change After the Revolution of 1911

Nearly 10 years after the Revolution, Sun Yat-sen said: “The current Republic of China has only one false sign; another great revolution should be carried out in the future; and then a genuine Republic of China will be founded” (Sun Yat-sen 2011, p. 1). The Revolution of 1911 failed to bring China to a democracy era really; the further reason was that Chinese social structure was not changed in the late Qing Dynasty and the early period of the Republic of China.

In the late Qing Dynasty, Chinese society was still an agricultural society for thousands of years. The landlord class and its aristocracy were the dominant upper class in Chinese agricultural society. Farmers and other working class were the main part of agricultural society and were in the underclass of the feudal society. According to the development of modern industrial and commercial situation in China, from 1895 to 1900, from the end of the Sino-Japanese War to the occupation of Beijing by the Eight-Power Allied Forces, there were 104 industrial and mining enterprises with the capital more than 10,000 Yuan in China; their total capital was more than 23.00 million Yuan. During this period, the Chinese private capital investment was only 3.8 million Yuan each year. From 1901 to 1910, during the period of 10 years from the occupation of Beijing by the Allied Forces to the Revolution of 1911, 370 industrial and mining enterprises were established in China; their total capital was 86.2 million Yuan; the average was 8.62 million Yuan each year (Hu Sheng 1981, p. 677). Thus, until the establishment of the Republic of China, Chinese modern industry and commerce were still very weak and Chinese society was still a traditional agricultural society. The Westernization Movement, the Hundred Days’ Reform and the Revolution of 1911 could not change the Chinese traditional social structure.

Histories of many countries show that democratic politics does not only mean the establishment of a constitutional system and the changes of political system of a country in form. Democracy needs to use the change of the traditional social structure as the premise; the new social structure is the basis of democratic politics of a new political system. If the old social structure is not transformed, the changes of all political systems and constitutional systems are only specious. Thus, the transformation of traditional social structure is the important prerequisite and primary task in modern Chinese democracy building.

2.2 National Condition Basis of Chinese Politics

The national condition is another important limiting factor in determining the political system. The historical conditions and characteristics of a country in the specific period include natural conditions, historical conditions, reality conditions, etc. Among the conditions, the area, population and natural resources and their distribution are the basic contents, so it is described as “basic national conditions”.

2.2.1 *Political System Built on the Basis of the Material*

Generally, people do not deny that the political system is built on certain economic basis, but it should not be forgotten that the economic base takes root in the material exchange activities between humans and nature. Natural historical conditions have the restrictive effect on the formation of the political system. As Marx pointed out, “The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual production processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary their social existence determines their consciousness.”⁵ Ancient and modern history shows that the political system of any country is not produced without foundation and is not created only by people’s subjective will. The political system is a product of development of social history, which is related to the economic, social and cultural conditions as well as the main problems in the development of a country; and the economic, social and cultural conditions are established on the basis of a particular substance.

The so-called basic national conditions generally refer to those that are not changed easily by subjective factors. For example, territory, geographic environment, population, natural resources and their distribution fall into the scope of basic national conditions. Understanding of democracy system is inseparable from the understanding of basic national conditions.

Geographical environment is the basis of geographical division. The labor division of humanity transited from the natural division of labor to the social division of labor and from the social division of labor to the geographical division of labor. Social division of labor improves the production efficiency and promotes the progress of human civilization. The formation of the geographical division is influenced by the natural environment and resource endowments. The division structure giving full play to the advantage of environment and natural resources can make the region achieve comparative advantage, which can promote the development of productive forces.

The level of social and economic development affects the political structure of society. The productive forces develop and economic surplus make it possible for the social class to appear. The economic dominant class becomes the political ruling class through national institutions, namely it becomes a political entity with public power.

⁵“Critique of Political Economy”, Preamble, Selected Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 2, People’s Publishing House, 1995, p. 32.

Ancient philosophers had noticed the influence of the basic conditions on the political system. Aristotle pointed out in *Politics* that the geographical environment, land and population would have a direct impact on the formation of the city and its constitutional regime and legislation.⁶

The French enlightenment philosopher Montesquieu is the representative of the theoretical study of correlation between geographical environment and social systems. He thought that climate, soil, land area and other geographical factors of a country had a direct impact on the national character, emotion, custom, law and political system in this country, or even have a decisive impact. Montesquieu conducted the research on the origins and change of law in Rome and France. He believed that the size of the national territory of a country also determined its political system of the country; republic is appropriate for small countries; it is better for medium-sized countries to be ruled by monarchs; and despotism is appropriate for large countries.

Marx also paid attention to the impact of natural geographical environment on human society. Marx and Engels pointed out in the *German Ideology* that the geographical environment, population growth and social development should be regarded as a unified whole. “Since the initial period of history when the first human beings appeared, the three aspects existed simultaneously, and they also play a role in the history now” (Marx and Engels 1995, p. 80). Marx pointed out in *Das Kapital* that “Different communes find different production materials and different life materials in their respective natural environment. Therefore, their production modes, lifestyles and products are different from one another” (Marx 1972, p. 390).

Basic national conditions are often necessary external conditions of social existence and development. It can influence and restrict the economic and social development. But the determining factor of social development and the state system is the human practice. It contributes to more in-depth understanding of congenital conditions of social and political development to recognize the impact of natural environment on human society; and it can help understand the regularity of political development. Of course, the role of natural environment in the social life and social development should not be blindly exaggerated; the social law is replaced with natural law, which will fall into the simplistic misunderstanding.

2.2.2 *The “Aihui-Tengchong Line (Hu Line)”: Chinese Basic Condition Line*⁷

The most important discovery of modern Chinese geography research was the “Aihui-Tengchong Line” found by Hu Huanyong, the founder of Chinese population geography, in 1935. The “Aihui-Tengchong Line” is the most important concept to recognize contemporary Chinese basic conditions.

⁶ See Aristotle (1983, p. 352–362).

⁷ Aihui: a city in Heilongjiang, a northern province; Tengchong: a city in Yunnan, a southern province.

In 1935, Mr. Hu Huanyong published the article of the “Distribution of the Chinese Population” in the Journal of Geographical Sciences. In this article, Hu Huanyong drew the first Chinese population contour density map by hand. He used a point to represent 10,000 people according to the Chinese sub-county demographic data collected in 1933.

Mr. Hu Huanyong found that the difference of population distribution between eastern and western China is very big; a 45° diagonal line exists between Aihui County in Heilongjiang Province in the north of China and Tengchong County in Yunnan province in the south of China roughly. The line is regarded as a boundary of the Chinese population geography. He pointed out in the article:

Now try to draw a straight line from Aihui (belonging to Heihe City) in Heilongjiang to the southwest to Tengchong in Yunnan; the country is divided into the southeast and the northwest by the line. Then the area of southeastern region accounts for about 36 percent of the total area; that of northwestern region accounts for about 64 percent. The distribution of population is 440 million in the Southeast, accounting for 96 percent of the total population; the population in the northwest is only 18 million, accounting for 4 percent of the total population; the difference is very big (Tang Bo 2011).

In view of the significance of the discovery by Mr. Hu Huanyong and his contribution to Chinese population geography, this line is also called the “Hu Huanyong line”.

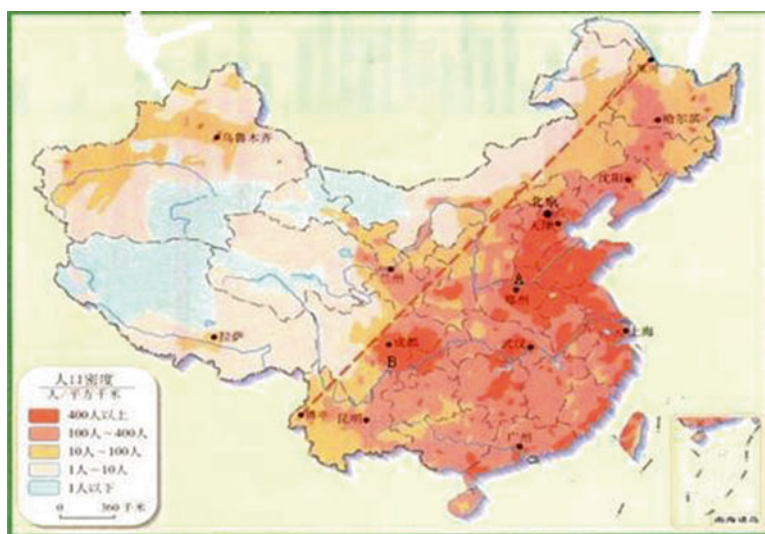


The population distribution map published in 1935 (English version) (Tang Bo 2011)

The important discovery of Mr. Hu Huanyong was the law of the population distribution between the east and the west of China by regarding Aihui-Tengchong line as the boundary. Since then, China has experienced the Second Sino-Japanese War, the War of Liberation, the founding of new China and the reform and opening up; huge changes have happened in economy, politics, society and culture in China; China has developed into an industrialized country growing rapidly from a backward agricultural country. However, the regularity of Chinese population distribution revealed by this line has not changed greatly in a few decades later. In 1987, Mr. Hu Huanyong pointed out according to the data analysis of the fourth national census conducted in 1982 in mainland China that “The area of the eastern China accounts for 42.9 % of the country currently, that of the western region accounts for 57.1 % of this country. 94.4 % of the population lives in the region to the east of the line; while the population in the western region accounts for only 5.6 % of the Chinese population”. Until the fifth census in 2000, the southeast to Hu Huanyong Line was still the densely populated area; the land area accounted for 43.8 % of the country, but the population accounted for 94.1 %; while the population in the northwest was sparse; the land area accounted for 56.2 % of the country, but the population was only 5.9 %. Compared to that in 1935, both the proportion of the population distribution and the ratio of population density have not changed much.⁸

The statistical results showed that Chinese economy developed rapidly; a lot of laborers went to coastal areas; the situation that the population was concentrated to the east of Aihui-Tengchong Line was not alleviated, on the contrary, it intensified after China entered the twenty-first century. Compared with the population census in 2000, the sixth national census data released by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2011 showed that the proportion of the population in the east of China increased by 2.41 percentage points; the proportion of the population in central, western and northeastern regions dropped, in which the reduction in the western region was the largest, decreased by 1.11 percentage points; followed by the central region, reduced by 1.08 percentage points; it was reduced by 0.22 percentage points in the Northeast (Tang Bo 2011). According to the sixth national census data, the total population of the provinces to the east of Aihui-Tengchong Line was more than 1.2 billion. In a certain sense, the content included in the “Aihui-Tengchong Line”—“basic national condition line” discovered several decades ago has become more profound now.

⁸Mongolia declared independence in the early 20th century and announced the establishment of the People's Republic of Mongolia on November 26, 1924. The Republic of China recognized the independence of the People's Republic of Mongolia on January 5, 1946. Therefore, when the population distribution line was calculated in 1982, compared with that in 1935, the proportion of land area on both sides of Aihui-Tengchong line changed from 64% to 57.1% in the west; from 36% to 42.9% in the east.



中国人口地理分界线

Source: Tang Bo: Hu Huanyong and the Mysterious ‘Hu Huanyong Line’”, The Map No. 4, 2011

In the 1980s, Chinese scholars found that there was an ecological environmental transition zone (or fragile zone) extending from the northeast to the southwest in China. It showed unique ecological fragility in the transition zone. In 1995, scholars demonstrated that the ecological environment fragile zone was distributed along Hu Huanyong line essentially (Zhang Lin 2010).⁹

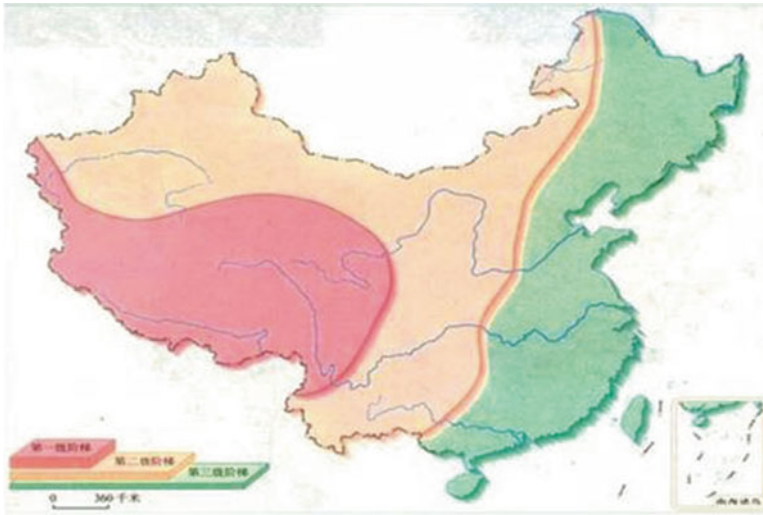
The distribution regularity of population revealed by the Aihui-Tengchong line has remained unchanged for several decades because this line is actually the natural geographic boundary and climate boundary in China.

China’s terrain generally descends from west to east like a three-step staircase. The first step of the terrain is the plateau with an average elevation of more than 4,000 m, mainly including the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Bayan Har Mountains, Tanggula Mountains, the Himalayas, Hengduan Mountains and Qaidam Basin. In the second step, there are large basins and plateaus at 1000–2000 m above sea level; they are the Inner Mongolia Plateau, Loess Plateau, Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau and Tarim Basin, Junggar Basin, Sichuan Basin; The third step is the plain and hills with

⁹Ma Jiantang: Release the Main Data of the Sixth National Population Census of the People’s Republic of China, the central government portal. http://www.gov.cn/gzdt/2011-04/28/content_1854048.htm.

an average elevation less 500 m; it mainly includes three plains (Northeast Plain, North China Plain and Yangtze River Plain) and three hills (Liaodong hills, Shandong hills and Southeast hills). The most part of the first and second steps, namely the land with the elevation higher than 1000 m, basically are to the west of Aihui-Tengchong line. Most of the plains and hilly areas suitable for human life and development of production lie to the east of Aihui-Tengchong line.

China is a country with a vast territory. It spans a vast range of latitudes; the distance from each area to the sea is different; the terrain elevation is not the same; terrain type and mountain range directions are diverse; thus the combination of temperature and precipitation is diverse, which forms a wide variety of climates. The east belongs to monsoon climate. The northwest belongs to the temperate continental climate; Qinghai-Tibet Plateau belongs to the cold climate.



中国地形三阶梯

Three-step staircase (Source: www.zxxk.com)



Climate distribution (Source: www.zxxk.com)

The 400 mm isohyet coincides with the Aihui-Tengchong Line roughly in China. The 400 mm isohyet is the boundary between semi-humid area and semi-arid area; the geography and climate on each side of the line are different. The region to the southeast of the 400 mm isohyet is humid area affected by the Pacific and Indian Ocean monsoon climate; the plains, water network, hills, karst and Danxia landform are the main geographic structure; it is suitable for agricultural development. The region to the northwest of the line belongs to arid area not affected or rarely affected by the southeast monsoon; grasslands, deserts and snowy plateau landform are the main structure.



Isohyet distribution (Source: www.zxxk.com)

Due to the influence of geography and climate, the region to the east of the Aihui-Tengchong line is suitable for the development of agriculture since ancient times. Large-scale urban agglomerations have developed in modern times and a large number of people live in cities; the natural conditions are harsh and ecological environment is fragile in the region to the west of the line; it is dominated by animal husbandry since ancient times and is a sparsely populated area. The Aihui-Tengchong population distribution line is the result of the impact of natural geographical environment on human activities.

Besides the great differences between eastern and western population distribution, the serious imbalance of distribution of various resources also exists.

The land resources in China have four basic characteristics: Absolute amount is large; the amount per capita is less; types are complex and diverse; proportion of arable land is low; utilization is complex; differences of productivity among different regions are large; geographical distribution is uneven; protection and development problems are obvious. Chinese mountain area accounts for two-thirds of the land area; sandy desert and Gobi account for more than 12 % of the total land area; the proportion of arable land area is slightly higher than 10 %.

The distribution of water resources is uneven. Rivers and lakes are the main freshwater resources in China. The runoff is 2200 m³ per capita in China, accounting for 24.7 % of the runoff per capita in the world. Among big river basins, the

water resource per capita is the largest in the Pearl River Basin; the runoff is approximately 4000 m³ per capita. That is slightly higher than the national average in the Yangtze River basin, approximately 2300–2500 m³. Haihe and Luanhe River Basin faces the severest water shortage; the runoff is less than 250 m³ per capita.

More water resources are distributed in the south than that in the north of China; on the contrary, more arable lands are distributed in the north than that in the south of China. The concentrated producing areas of wheat and cotton are in the North China Plains. The arable land accounts for approximately 40 % of the country, but water resources only account for approximately 6 % of the country. The uncoordinated distribution of water and soil resources further exacerbates the water shortage in northern China.

The hydropower reserves are 680 million kilowatts in China, ranking first in the world. Seventy percent of them are in four southwestern provinces, cities and the Tibetan Autonomous Region, where the reserves in the Yangtze River are the largest, followed by the Yarlung Zangbo River. Yellow River and Pearl River also have large water reserves. At present, the developed and utilized regions mainly are in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, Yellow River and Pearl River.

The main characteristics of the distribution of mineral resources in China are that geographical distribution is uneven. For example, iron ore distribution is mainly in Liaoning, eastern Hebei and western Sichuan; coal mines are mainly in the north, northwest, northeast and southwest of China; they are mainly in Shanxi, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang. Although the uneven distribution is conducive to large-scale mining, it also brings great pressure to transportation. It needs to strengthen the transportation construction and develop large-scale logistics for effective deployment and use of uneven distribution of resources across the country.¹⁰

Because the territory is vast and the distribution of resources is uneven, the inter-regional allocation of resources has been implemented since ancient times in China. Because of geography and climate, the Chinese ancient breadbasket was concentrated in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong and Guangxi. The main ancient resource allocation was to achieve “South-to-north Grain Transportation” by water transportation. The Grand Canal from Yuhang (now Hangzhou) in the south to Zhuojun (now Beijing) in the north witnessed the allocation of goods between the south and the north for more than 2000 years in China. More than 9000 ships transported grain from the south to the north through Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal in Ming Dynasty; about 4 million shi (a shi equals 60,000 g) were transported from the south to the north through the canal in Qing Dynasty each year. The pattern of “South to-North Grain Transportation” continued until the 1970s. After that, due to the comprehensive development of the northern agriculture, improvement of agricultural technologies, construction of commodity grain bases and improvement of water conservancy facilities, the central and northern China has gradually become the main producing areas of grain. The grain deployment pattern gradually becomes “North to-South Grain Transportation”.

¹⁰ See the Natural Resources, Survey of China, The People's Republic of China Yearbook, Chinese government portal. http://www.gov.cn/test/2005-07/27/content_17405.htm.

The coal resources are more concentrated in Shanxi, Shaanxi and western Inner Mongolia in China. After the founding of new China, the Eastern and Southern China become large consumers of coal due to large-scale industrialization and urbanization. "Transport coal from the north to the south" and "Transport coal from the west to the east" have become the main content of the deployment of resources. Deployment of coal resources focus on the northern, central and southern transportation channels. Northern channels include Datong-Qinhuangdao railway, Fengtai-Shacheng railway and Beijing-Taiyuan railway, which undertake approximately 55 % of the total volume of transport from the west to the east; besides the supply to Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei, most of them are transported by sea at Qinhuangdao Port; and a certain amount of them are transported to the northeastern regions. The new Shenmu-Huanghua Railway also is the main line for coal transport from the west to east. Coal is turned to maritime transport at Huanghua Port. The central channel includes Shijiazhuang-Taiyuan Railway, undertaking approximately 25 % of the total volume of transport from the west to the east; most of them are turned to Qingdao Port for maritime transport by Shijiazhuang-Dezhou Railway. The southern channels include Taiyuan-Jiaozuo Railway, Handan-Changzhi Railway, Houma-Yueshan Railway and Southern Taiyuan-Puzhou Railway, undertaking about 20 % of the total volume from west to east; the coal is turned to maritime transport at Rizhao Port by the Xinxiang-Heze-Yanzhou-Rizhao Railway.

After entering the new century, as the important content of developing the western region, projects of West-east Natural Gas Transmission, West-east Electricity Transmission and South-north Water Diversion started. The strategic allocation of resources for resolving the uneven distribution of resources entered a new stage in China.

The project of West-east Natural Gas Transmission is the iconic construction project of western development being started in 2000 and is another major investment project after the Three Gorges Project. Reserves of natural gas resources in Tarim Basin, Qaidam Basin, Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Basin and Sichuan Basin are 26 trillion cubic meters, accounting for about 87 % of onshore natural gas resources in China. "West-east Natural Gas Transmission" mainly transports the natural gas in Tarim Basin in Xinjiang to the Yangtze River Delta region through the natural gas pipelines. The natural gas pipelines run through 11 provinces; its total length is 4000 km; the designed annual gas transmission capacity is 12 billion cubic meters; the final gas transmission capacity is 20 billion cubic meters. It was completed and used on October 1, 2004. In early 2008, the second line project of "West-east Natural Gas Transmission" started formally. It is the world's longest transnational gas pipeline, which can transport the natural gas produced in Xinjiang in China and those imported from Turkmenistan to the Midwest region and the Yangtze River Delta, Pearl River Delta along the line, so that 300 million people can benefit from it; and it can supply gas stably for more than 30 years.

The West-east Electricity Transmission Project is to develop power resources in Guizhou, Yunnan, Guangxi, Sichuan, Inner Mongolia, Shanxi, Shaanxi and other western provinces and deliver the electricity to Guangdong, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Beijing, Tianjin and Tangshan lacking electricity. "15th Five-Year-Plan Outline" proposed the construction of Northern, Central and Southern channels for "West-east Electricity Transmission". The northern channel transports the hydro-power from the upstream of the Yellow River and pithead thermal power from Shanxi

and Inner Mongolia to Beijing, Tianjin and Tangshan; the central channel transports the hydropower from Three Gorges and the main stream and tributaries of Jinsha River to the eastern China; the southern channel transports the resource of water and electricity in Guizhou, Guangxi and Yunnan Provinces and thermal power resources in Yunnan and Guizhou provinces to Guangdong, Hainan and other places.

In 1952, Chairman Mao Zedong proposed the idea when he inspected the Yellow River: “There is a lot of water in the south of China and too little in the north. If it’s possible, we can borrow a bit and bring it to the north.” A 50-year democracy demonstration and scientific comparison process of the South–north Water Diversion Project started.¹¹

After nearly half a century of preparation, China began the largest inter-basin water diversion project in human history. The main objective of the South–north Water Diversion is to solve water shortage problem in the North, especially in the basin of Yellow River, Huaihe River and Haihe River; the population is 438 million in the planning area. Water diversion project transports water from the upstream, middle stream and downstream of Yangtze River respectively to the Northwestern and Northern China lacking water. Water diversion lines are divided into western, middle and eastern lines. The west line project will deploy water from water source of Yangtze River in northwestern China to supplement the water source of the Yellow River in northern China; the central line project diverts water from the Danjiangkou Reservoir at Han River, the tributary of the Yangtze River, and the canal along the plain in front of Funiu Mountain and Taihang Mountain to Beijing; the eastern line starts from Jiangdu, Jiangsu, and passes through Anhui, Henan, Shandong and Hebei and arrives in Tianjin finally. At the end of 2002, the South–north Water Diversion project started comprehensively.

2.3 Constraints and Requirements of Chinese Conditions for the Political System

Chinese civilization was born in Huaxia¹² space, which is surrounded and guarded by mountains, deserts and seas and was nurtured by two “Mother Rivers”, the Yellow River and the Yangtze River. Unique geographical environment, natural resources and population distribution have an important impact on Chinese social structure and political system since ancient times. Chinese basic conditions require that Chinese political system have the following functions: conducive to maintaining the unity and territorial integrity of the country, national unity and harmony, resource allocation, disaster prevention and mitigation. Chinese civilization and Chinese nation thrives and continues for 5000 years in the world, the reason is that Chinese political systems in the history could generally adapt to Chinese basic conditions and social factors, including political factors and natural factors.

¹¹ See Wang Hao (2013).

¹² Here means China.

2.3.1 *“Grand Unification”: Two-River (the Yangtze River and the Yellow River) Civilization Gave Birth to the Ancient Political System*

“Grand unification” is considered to be the characteristic of the state and political system in ancient China. The so-called “Grand” is that a vast country covers Mongolian Plateau in the north, the South China Sea, the East China Sea and Pamirs in the west in the East Asian continent; the so-called “Unification” is that the vast populous country implements the unified centralized system. Except the situation that the country was invaded by enemies or split due to civil war in the ancient history of China, people lived in such a unified empire. The ancient Chinese civilization is the unique civilization not interrupted in the human history. Chinese culture has continued for thousands of years. This particular case in the history of human civilization was inseparable from the state and the political system of “Grand unification” in ancient China; the reason that China formed a highly stable ancient civilization not interrupted and the state system of “Grand unification” was inseparable from the geography, climate, resources and other natural conditions and environment in the East Asian Continent where China is located.

The vast East Asian Continent covering Mongolian Plateau in the north, the South China Sea in the south, the East China Sea in the east and Pamirs, where Chinese nation had lived since ancient times, can be described as “Huaxia Space”, namely the survival and thriving space of the Chinese nation in ancient China. The main part of Chinese space is in the Yellow River basin and the Yangtze River basin, in two monsoon belts of the temperate monsoon climate and subtropical monsoon climate zone. The Yangtze River mainly belongs to the subtropical monsoon climate; the Yellow River mainly belongs to temperate monsoon climate. It was agricultural civilization in ancient China; farmers were at the mercy of the forces of nature under the production technology conditions then. Monsoon climate often makes agricultural production be in an unstable state. Droughts and floods occurred frequently since ancient times in China; the damage was serious. On the other hand, between two rivers and two climatic zones, the exchange of goods, mutual complement and coordination became the important condition and mechanism for maintaining the survival state of Chinese nation. North–south climate often has opposite and complementary role, which is described as “Our country has a vast territory and abundant resources; the South and the North can complement each other”.

Since the Warring States Period, there were inter-basin water conservation projects in China. Beijing–Hangzhou Grand Canal spanned two climatic zones and several large basins and ran through the north and the south. It was built in the Sui Dynasty and was an important economic regulatory system connecting the south with the north. It helped the people benefit from it in the history of Chinese civilization. And this economic regulatory system provided a solid economic foundation for the unified Chinese civilization.

Mencius once proposed the political principle of “The world will be in one”. Liu Zongyuan in Tang Dynasty analyzed the reason of the formation of a centralized

system in ancient China in his *On Feudalism*. He pointed out: wars occurred inevitably among people because of restrictions of the production conditions in early human society. The result of ethnic struggle was differentiation of ethnic groups and appearing of leaders of various ethnic groups and the legal system. The strong annexed the weak after continuous fights and wars; and the unified country ruled by the strong was formed gradually.

Huaxia space had relatively closed natural boundary, which formed a relatively independent space. Different people and Groups in the same space competed for limited resources and wealth. Competition produced winners and losers. The losers surrendered to the winners; winners protected losers, and therefore a stable political and social order was formed. This competition continued to occur, repeat and develop in all regions at all levels, eventually the ultimate winner on the top layer was formed, thus the overall unified orderly country was formed, which was called “The world will be in one”. In other words, in Huaxia space, social relations and organization forms of people beyond the two-river civilization must develop towards unification inevitably. This is the inevitable result of social competition under particular natural conditions. This is the basic rule of political development in Chinese civilization. It is the basic reason that China, the ancient civilization country of thousands of years formed and maintained a unified nation state for a long time.

2.3.2 Unification and Development: Requirements of National Conditions for Contemporary Chinese Political System

What were the contemporary Chinese conditions like? Mao Zedong summarized Chinese characteristics as: “economically poor and culturally blank”; Deng Xiaoping said: “China has a huge population and a weak economic foundation”; Chen Yun added, one billion people, of which 800 million people are in rural areas. The incisive description of Chinese conditions by the older generation of revolutionaries summarized the basic characteristics of Chinese conditions from the early days of the founding of China to the reform and opening up.

Since the reform and opening up, after 30 years of rapid economic development, significant changes occurred in Chinese conditions. When the People’s Republic of China was founded in 1949, China was one of the poorest countries in the world, with a large population and backward economy. In 1949, the national income per capita was only 66 Yuan; the average life expectancy was 35 years; Chinese steel output was only 158,000 tons that year, only one-eighth of the output of India. From 1953 to 1978, the economy increased by an average of 6.1 % in China. In 1978, GDP was 364.5 billion Yuan, ranking tenth in main countries in the world; the national income per capita was \$190. China was one of the least developed low-income countries in the world. Reform and opening up promoted Chinese economy to enter the sustainable and rapid development stage. From 1978 to 2012, the average growth rate of the economy reached more than 9 % in China. Chinese GDP ranked second in the world currently; it ranked tenth in

1978. Its proportion in the world economy increased from 1.9 % in 1980 to 10.5 % in 2011 steadily. While the economy developed rapidly, people's lives were improved greatly. From 1979 to 2012, the real average growth rate of Chinese PCDI (Per Capita Disposable Income) of urban households and that of rural households reached 8 % and 7.5 %, respectively; Chinese GDP per capita exceeded more than \$6000 in 2012; China entered the ranks of middle-income countries from the previous low-income country in the mid-1980s.

Reform and opening up accelerated the process of industrialization and urbanization greatly in China; the development of the whole Chinese society enters the middle stage of industrialization. At present, the urbanization rate exceeds 50 % in China. While the industrialization and urbanization develop rapidly, some of Chinese basic national conditions also remain unchanged, and compared with that before reform and opening up, a more unbalanced aspect also exists.

Uneven regional economic development and uneven distribution of resources is one of the remarkable characteristics of Chinese national conditions. "Aihui-Tengchong line" is the significant sign of this basic uneven situation. Since the reform and opening up, as the historical change in the economic and social development occurs, uneven regional economic development and uneven distribution of resources also further develops, it should be said, the meaning of "Aihui-Tengchong line" becomes more profound. Chinese current conditions put forward main requirements for the development of contemporary Chinese political system and democratic politics in two aspects:

(a) The Contemporary Chinese Political System Must Have the Function of Maintaining National Unification

China has a vast territory and a large population; economy grows rapidly; resource distribution and development are uneven; regional differences are significant. Since the reform and opening up, the rapid development of industrialization and urbanization has resulted in the formation of several huge economic functional areas with different development speeds and levels in China, including the seven functional areas of the Yangtze River Delta, the Pearl River Delta, the Bohai Economic Rim, the northeastern region, the five provinces in the central region, the southwestern region and the northwestern region.

Taking the two functional areas, the Yangtze River Delta and the Pearl River Delta as an example, the Yangtze River Delta is the alluvial plain before the Yangtze River enters the ocean; it covers Tongyang Canal in the north, the Qiantang River and Hangzhou Bay in the south, Nanjing in the west and the coast in the east, including Shanghai, Southern Jiangsu Province, Hangjiahu plain in Zhejiang Province Plain and the eastern Anhui Province; its area is approximately 50,000 km². It is a flat great plain. The Yangtze River Delta is a region with fastest economic growth, largest economic scale and strongest development potential in China. The Yangtze River Delta region accounts for about 1 % of the national land area, and the population accounts for about 6 % of the total population, but they create nearly 20 % of GDP and one-fourth of the national revenue. The Yangtze River Delta is an important world-class industrial manufacturing base. More than 400 enterprises among

global top 500 enterprises have settled in the area, in which more than 200 enterprises set up their regional headquarters and Chinese headquarters in Shanghai.

The Pearl River Delta is also divided into the little Pearl River Delta and the large Pearl River Delta. The Little Pearl River Delta is the Delta formed by impact and precipitation when West River, North River and East River enter the ocean. Its area is approximately 56,000 km². The Delta is located in south-central Guangdong Province, downstream of the Pearl River and adjacent to Hong Kong and Macao; the Delta and Southeast Asia are separated by the sea; land and sea transportation is convenient; it is known as the “southern gate” of China. In 2012, the total output value amounted to 4.789,725 trillion Yuan in Pearl River Delta region; GDP per capita amounted to 13,454 U.S. dollars. The Large Pearl River Delta refers to the region composed of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macau. Its area is 181,000 km²; the total household population is 86,790,000; the third largest metropolis cluster in the world is located here. In terms of the economic scale, the large Pearl River Delta has exceeded the Yangtze River Delta region.

The regional area, population, industrial structure and the level of economic development in the Yangtze River Delta and the Pearl River Delta are in a leading and dominant position in China and even in the world today. Its industrial structure has integrity; its economy scale is tremendous; the population is large. There are independent survival and development potentials in this economic region. Many experiences in the world history show that the rapid expansion of economic scale and relative integrity of industrial structure in a particular area may bring separatist tendency of politics. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, political upheavals occurred in the former socialist countries in Eastern Europe; some countries disintegrated; the economic structural difference among different regions in the countries was one of the important reasons. In this aspect, the economic reason of disintegration of Yugoslavia was the most typical. Reforms starting in the 1950s provided a driving force for the Yugoslav economy. The economic development in Yugoslavia was in the advanced position in Eastern Europe. Because of closer economic relations with European countries and other reasons, the economic distribution in Yugoslavia changed gradually; the light industry trade-based economic region appeared, such as Croatia and Slovenia; the heavy industry and resource output-based economic region appeared, such as Serbia, etc. Differences in economic distribution and the differentiation of economic benefits caused by it became the economic causes of political upheaval and separatist war of Yugoslavia.

In the world, China's population accounts for nearly one-fifth of the world population and ranks first; the land area ranks third; economic scale ranks second in the world. Such a huge scale and internal difference require China must have the ability to balance the development of different regions, to control the further expansion of regional disparities and to create conditions for reducing regional disparities gradually. The ability of balancing and controlling depends on the ability of deployment policies formulated by the central government, while the ability of developing policy by the central government will rely on the political power structure of the country. So in China, the largest country in the world, the national political system must have a certain level of centralization. In the aspect, it is bound to differ from any other coun-

try in the world. In April 2001, Jiang Zemin, Chinese president and General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee put forward three standards for Chinese political reform, namely “Develop the people’s democracy; safeguard national unification and security and promote economic and social development” (Jiang Zemin 2006, p. 235). This unique standard for development of democratic politics and implementation of political reform is the product of Chinese unique conditions.

(b) The Contemporary Chinese Political System Must Have the Functions of Safeguarding Sustainable and Coordinated Development of National Economy

The political system of any country has the function of safeguarding the development of national economy, but the economic safeguarding function of Chinese political system has its own characteristics; such characteristics come from Chinese basic conditions, in particular the special distribution of Chinese natural resources and economic resources. Chinese economic development depends on Chinese system and the hard work of the Chinese people; and it also relies on Chinese resource endowments and economic endowments. The uneven distribution of natural resources and economic resources is the special condition in China.

Resources are the most basic conditions of the economic development of a country. China has two “Firsts” of the world in terms of natural resources: firstly, water resources are the most abundant in the world; secondly, coal resources are the most abundant; the coal production ranks first in the world at present; the proven coal reserves rank third in the world. According to a survey in 2005, there are 3,886 rivers with the theoretical reserves of 10,000 kW and above of hydropower resources in China. When the theoretical reserves of hydropower resources are 6.0829 trillion kwh calculated according to annual electricity quantity, the installed capacity that can be developed economically is 401.8 million kilowatts; the annual generating capacity is 1.7534 trillion kwh. At present, the developed water resources is about 20 % according to the calculation. China is rich in coal resources. According to the statistics in 2000, the mineable coal reserves were 984.211 billion tons in the world, of which 246.643 billion tons were in the United States; 157.01 billion tons were in Russia; 114.5 billion tons were in China, ranking third in the world.

The rich water and coal resources become favorable conditions for supporting economic development in China, but the negative aspect is that the distribution of water and coal resources is very uneven; the resources are concentrated in sparsely populated and underdeveloped central and western regions, roughly to the west of “Aihui-Tengchong Line” or along the “Aihui-Tengchong Line”, far away from the southeast coastal economic development region where resources are used and consumed intensively. Calculate according to the water resources, the water resources in Yangtze River accounts for 53.4 % of the total national amount; Brahmaputra River and other rivers in Tibet account for 15.4 %; International rivers in the southwest accounts for 10.9 %; the Yellow River: 6.1 %; Pearl River: 5.8 %; others: 8.4 %. The distribution of coal resources is extremely uneven; the overall situation shows that more coal resources are in the north and less resources in the south; more resources in the west and less resources in the east. In terms of the regional situation, the largest distribution is in Northern China, accounting for 49.25 % of the

national reserves; followed by the Northwest, accounting for 30.39 % of the country; Southwest: 8.64 %; Eastern China: 5.7 %; Central South region: 3.06 %; Northeast region: 2.97 %.

Chinese population, production capacity and the consumer market are mainly concentrated in the eastern coastal region, which forms a contrast to that mentioned above. Chinese population accounts for nearly one-fifth of the world population; with the rapid economic and social development, people's living standards are improved rapidly; human resources and consumer market resources become two major economic resources besides water and coal resources in China. In 2012, Chinese total retail sales of social consumer goods reached 21.0307 trillion Yuan; the Chinese consumer market and consumer capacity attract the attention of the world. However, more than 90 % of the population and corresponding market resources are concentrated in the southeastern region, east to the "Aihui-Tengchong Line". They are mainly in Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Tianjin and other cities among the top 20 cities in the southeast coastal region; the consuming capability accounts for about 35.6 % of the national urban consumption.

The inverted distribution of Chinese resources and population causes the serious imbalance of Chinese economic layout. The result is massive transfer and flow of resources in Chinese economic activities; in which the most important and attractive activities are as follows: West-east Coal Transport, West-east Electricity Transmission, West-east Natural Gas Transmission and South-north Water Diversion.

In 2012, the total coal output was 3.66 billion tons in China, of which about 40 % of coal was transported out of the origin provinces. Until 2015, it is expected the coal output will reach 3.9 billion tons in China; 1.66 billion tons of coal will be transported out of provinces; and until then, the rail transportation demand of coal will reach 2.6 billion tons in the country. While the West-to-East Coal Transport is carried out, energy will be transported to the economically developed eastern regions in the mode of remote power transmission; they also are the consumption concentrated regions. In 2012, the sales of electricity by West-east power transmission in Southern Power Grid reached 100.52 billion kwh. In 2014, the east and middle line of the South-to-North Water Diversion project will enter the operational phase; water from the south will moisturize the land in the north. The final diversion scale of the South-to-North Water Diversion project is 44.8 billion cubic meters, of which east line: 14.8 billion cubic meters; middle line: 13 billion cubic meters; west line: 17 billion cubic meters.

If China wants to develop and achieve industrialization, urbanization and modernization, she must address the serious problems of uneven distribution of resources. The basic conditions of uneven distribution of resources and the needs of social development require China must have the political system with the ability to coordinate the large scale deployment of resources in the country.

The national conditions set the possibility space for the choice of political system. Chinese basic conditions determine that the fundamental task of contemporary Chinese society is to achieve national development and modernization. Under the theme, Chinese political system must be able to fully mobilize enthusiasm, initiative and creativity of the people in nation-building and pursuing the happy life; at the

same time, she must be able to concentrate the resources and wisdom of the people; it should be conducive to reasonable and effective deployment of resources in the country and in favor of defending national security and safeguarding social stability and unity. For contemporary Chinese political system, only these conditions required by the country and people in developing are met, can it be a selectable and viable system and a real system required by Chinese people; and thus it is a truly democratic system.

The formation of democratic political system characterized by the unity of adherence to leadership by the Party, ensuring that the people are masters of the country and governing the country according to law, fundamentally speaking, is the realistic choice under contemporary Chinese conditions.

References

- Aristotle. (1983). *Political Science* (Trans. Wu Shoupeng). The Commercial Press.
- Hu Sheng. (1981, June). From opium war to the may fourth movement (Vol. 2). People's Publishing House.
- Jiang Zemin. (2006). The purpose of political reform is to improve the socialist political system. In *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin* (Vol. 3). People's Publishing House.
- John King Fairbank. (1993). The Cambridge history of China (Vol. 1, the Chinese translation version). China Social Sciences Press.
- Kong Lingren. (1980). Shandong socio-economic and boxer movement in late nineteenth century. *Journal of Arts of Shandong University*, 1: 20–22.
- Marx, K. (1972). *Das Kapital, collected works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels* (Vol. 23). People's Publishing House.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1995). *The German ideology, selected works of Marx and Engels* (Vol. 1). People's Publishing House.
- Sun Yat-sen. (1981). *Notice of the founding of Chinese revolutionary party* (Complete Works of Sun Yat-sen, Vol. 3). Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- Sun Yat-sen. (2011) Speech at the headquarters of the Kuomintang of China in Shanghai. In *Sun Yat-sen anthology* (Vol. 2). People's Publishing House.
- Tang Bo. (2011). Hu Huanyong and the mysterious 'Hu Huanyong Line'. *The Map*, Issue 4.
- Wang Hao. (2013, October 2). South-to-north water diversion project: Inevitable choice of Chinese water regimen. *Guangming Daily*.
- Zhang Lin. (2010, January 20). Distribution regularity of the population revealed by Hu Huanyong line has not yet been broken. *Science Times*.

Chapter 3

Democratic Political Construction in Contemporary China

The basic value of socialist theory and practice is the economic equality and political democracy based on it. Communists regarding achieving socialism and communism as their ideas consider democracy as an essential political aspiration. In Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels put forward: “We have seen that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy” (Marx and Engels 1972, p. 272). The basic value pursuit of the CPC also is the social liberation and people’s democracy. After the CPC was founded, through the long-term struggle of the Revolution, Agrarian Revolutionary War, the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Liberation War, the People’s Republic of China was founded. After the founding of New China, the CPC obtained the long-term ruling position and began to explore the construction of socialist democratic politics.

3.1 Create Democratic Politics Preliminarily After the Founding of New China

After the founding of New China, China established the socialist legal system, the people’s congress system, the multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the CPC, the regional ethnic autonomy system and other practice forms of socialist democracy; and created the democratic political form reflecting the characteristics of people as masters preliminarily.

3.1.1 Formulation of the First “Constitution”

In September 1949, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference was held. It adopted the Common Program of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. The Common Program clearly defined the system and regime of new China: “The People’s Republic of China is a New Democratic or a People’s Democratic state. It carries out the people’s democratic dictatorship led by the working class, based on the alliance of workers and peasants, and uniting all democratic classes and all nationalities in China.” “The state power of the People’s Republic of China belongs to the people. The people’s congresses and the people’s governments at all levels are the organs for the exercise of state power by the people. The people’s congresses at all levels shall be popularly elected by universal suffrage.” “The National People’s Congress is the highest organ of state power. When the National People’s Congress is not in session, the Central People’s Government is the highest organ for exercising of state power.”¹ Shortly after the founding of New China, many things needed to be done, and China did not have conditions for the development of constitution; the “Common Program” played a role of the interim constitution under the historical conditions then, which had an important historical significance in the democratic political development history in China.



The 1st Chinese People’s political consultative conference

¹ Common Program of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, Selected Important Documents since the Founding of the P. R. C. (Vol. 1), Central Party Literature Press, 1992, p. 2.

After the founding of New China, independence and unification of the country had been achieved; people of all nationalities united together on the basis of equality, fraternity and mutual aid. The national economy recovered; socialist construction and socialist transformation began. China had conditions for convening the National People's Congress and formulating the constitution. In November 1952, the CPC Central Committee decided to convene the National People's Congress and formulate the constitution immediately. In January 1953, the 20th meeting of the Central People's Government Committee adopted the Resolution on Convening the National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses at All Level and decided to establish the Constitution Drafting Committee headed by Mao Zedong, the CPC Central Committee Chairman for comprehensive preparations for the formulation of constitution. In February 1953, The Election Law of the People's Republic of China was promulgated. In December 1953, the universal suffrage of national scale started in China for the first time; nearly 300 million voters participated in the election. 5.669 million representatives of grassroots and 1,226 representatives of NPC were elected by the national people.

In order to draft the constitution, Mao Zedong and other top leaders read and studied various constitutions including those of the socialist and capitalist countries in the world. Mao Zedong made reference to the practice that the constitution the Soviet Russia used the Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People written by Lenin as the first chapter in 1918. He decided to write a preface in front of the general principles of the constitution. The "preface" of the Constitution has become a characteristic of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and has been preserved. Mao Zedong personally revised the Explanation on the Draft Constitution, which reflected the guiding ideology for drafting the constitution. About safeguarding the national democracy legally by the draft constitution, the Explanation pointed out that "The socialization of the country ensures its democratization radically. Meanwhile the socialization of the country also requires further democratization of the country. The provisions about national institutions and people's rights in draft constitution guarantee the development of national democratization legally". The draft constitution collected opinions extensively and carried out discussion across the country and made some changes.

On September 20, 1954, the First Session of the First National People's Congress adopted and promulgated the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. The first Constitution of New China has important significance in the history of the development of democracy in China. The constitution is a summary of historical experiences of the national independence and social liberation struggle of the Chinese people for a hundred years. It reflects Chinese people's will. The preamble to the Constitution pointed out: The People's Republic of China implements the people's democratic system, which guarantees that China in peaceful way can banish exploitation and poverty and build a prosperous and happy socialist society. The Constitution provides three systems of Chinese democratic political system: the people's congress system, the multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the CPC and the regional ethnic autonomy system.

3.1.2 *Establishing the People's Congress System*

The People's Congress is the fundamental political system of China. In 1940, Mao Zedong put forward the idea of the people's congress system explicitly in the On New Democracy for the first time: "China can now adopt the system of the National People's Congress, local people's congresses at county and township levels; and the government is elected by Congresses at all levels" (Mao Zedong 1991, p. 677).

Before the New China was founded, on August 26, 1949, the CPC Central Committee issued instructions that people's representative conference must be held in cities and counties with the population more than 30,000. On October 1, 1949, after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Central People's Government and the Administrative Conference of the Administration Council adopted and issued the general rules of people's representative conference and provided its composition, tenure and power. In April 1951, the State Council issued the Instructions about Construction of People's Democratic Regime and required the governments at all levels must hold the people's representative meeting on schedule according to the general rules of the people's representative conference organization. All important work of governments at all levels should be reported to the people's representative conference and be discussed and reviewed at the meeting. All important problems should be discussed and decided by the people's representative conference. From 1950 to 1952, the peak of the construction of democratic politics was formed in the country. Its main content was to convene People's Congress. Until the end of 1952, the local people's congress at various levels had been convened, in which provincial-level People's Congress, more than one third of the county People's Congress, more than two-thirds of municipal People's Congress, as well as most of the township People's Congress had exercised the powers on behalf of the People's Congress.²

After several years of transition, the time for convening the National People's Congress was ripe. The first conference of the first National People's Congress was convened in September 1954; and the first Constitution of new China was adopted, which marked the formal establishment of People's Congress as a system of fundamental political system of our country.

The People's Congress system includes the following aspects: (1) The nature of People's Congress system. Constitution provides that "All power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people. The organs through which the people exercise state power are the National People's Congress (NPC) and the local people's congresses at different levels." This is the fundamental principle and core content of the People's Congress system. The National People's Congress is the highest organ of state power. The National People's Congress is the only organ to exercise the legislative power of the country. (2) The NPC member electoral system. The Constitution provides the principles, methods, organizations and procedures for the election of people's representatives and the term of the representatives of the people

² See Liu Zheng (2002).

at different levels. The determination of the electoral system is the safeguarding of the system that people realize the right to vote and to be elected prescribed by the Constitution. (3) The organizational and operational principles of the people's congress system. The Constitution specifies the relation between the people's congress and the people and the relation between the people's congress and all administrative, judicial and procuratorial organs of the state. The National People's Congress and the local people's congresses at various levels are constituted through democratic elections. They are responsible to the people and subject to their supervision. All administrative, judicial and procuratorial organs of the state are created by the people's congresses to which they are responsible and by which they are supervised. The Constitution also specifies the relationship between the central and local state organs, i. e. the division of functions and powers between the central and local state organs.

3.1.3 Establishing the Political Party System with Chinese Characteristics

The multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the CPC is the Political Party system with Chinese characteristics and is a basic political system of the People's Republic of China. Communist Party of China is the ruling Party; the democratic parties are the participating parties. Eight democratic parties of the multi-party cooperation system in China are the Revolutionary Committee of Chinese Kuomintang, China Democratic League, China Democratic National Construction Association, China Association for Promoting Democracy, Chinese Peasants and Workers Democratic Party, China Zhi Gong Party, Jiusan Society and Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League. During the period of new democratic revolution, these parties explicitly supported the Communist Party of China and responded positively to the idea of convening new Political Consultative Conference and establishing democratic coalition government put forward by the Communist Party of China; and they wished to struggle for the establishment of new China jointly under the leadership of the CPC. In September 1949, the 1st Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference was held, which marked the establishment of the important institution for achieving multi-party cooperation and political consultation by the CPPCC and also marked the establishment of the multi-Party cooperation system in China.

In March 1950, the United Front Work Department of the CPC held its first National United Front Work Conference in Beijing. Minister Li Wei-han made a presentation entitled the New Situation and New Task of the People's Democratic United Front to clarify the nature and role of the democratic parties and basic policies of CPC for the democratic parties. Li Wei-han pointed out in the report that the democratic parties were the nature of class alliance, not a single class Party. The basic principles of the relationship between the CPC and the democratic parties are as follows: both unite them to struggle by using the common program as a criterion politically and ideologically and respect their independence in the organization;

negotiate with them, suggest and tell the truth sincerely; conduct appropriate criticism if necessary rather than control them from the organization. Zhou Enlai made a speech twice at the meeting; he pointed out that Chinese people's democratic dictatorship was the regime of the people's democratic united front led by the CPC. The democratic parties played a very important role in the people's democratic united front. We had the slogan of "Unity, resistance and progress" in the war for the democratic parties; it should be "Unity, construction and progress" now. When he listened to the meeting report, Mao Zedong pointed out: "Only the proletariat liberates all mankind, can they finally liberate themselves. It is not acceptable for Chinese working class to obtain their own liberation only; they must obtain the common liberation of four classes".³

In December 1954, the first meeting of the second CPPCC National Committee was held in Beijing. Mao Zedong presided over the opening ceremony. Zhou Enlai expounded the CPPCC's five tasks in the Political Report systematically: (1) Negotiate international problems. (2) Negotiate the list of candidates of the National People's Congress and local people's congress at the same level, and candidates of members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. (3) Assist national authorities to promote social forces and solve relationship problems among various classes in social life; contact the people and reflect their views to relevant state authorities and make recommendations. (4) Consult and deal with the cooperation within the CPPCC and among parties and groups. (5) On a voluntary basis, study Marxism-Leninism and try hard to transform thoughts.⁴ This is a comprehensive and authoritative interpretation of the political consultative system with Chinese characteristics.

The first generation of the CPC collective leadership headed by Mao Zedong repeatedly stressed the importance of multi-party cooperation and political consultation system. In March 1956, Mao Zedong first proposed the policy of "Long-term Coexistence, Mutual Supervision" in *On the Ten Major Relationships* (Mao Zedong 1999, p. 36). In April 1957, Zhou Enlai made the explanation at Zhejiang Provincial Party Committee enlarged meeting: "Long-term coexistence and mutual supervision mainly mean the relationship between the Communist Party and other democratic parties"; "Policy of long-term coexistence and mutual supervision is to expand democracy actually; the population is 600 million in our country. If we want 600 million people to live a good life and build socialism, it is impossible without mutual supervision and expansion of democracy" (Zhou Enlai 1984a, p. 350). In April 1957, Deng Xiaoping explained this policy in detail in the report entitled *The Party Members Should Be Subject to Supervision*: "Supervision is bet-

³Four classes refer to working class, peasant class, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie. *Establishment of the New China and the United Front in Socialist Transition Period* (1949. 10–1956. 9), website of United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee. <http://www.zytzb.org.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/tzb2010/s1489/200911/575718.html>.

⁴Establishment of the New China and the United Front in Socialist Transition Period (1949. 10–1956. 9), website of United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee. <http://www.zytzb.org.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/tzb2010/s1489/200911/575718.html>.

ter than no supervision; everyone's ideas are better than those of some people; the Communist Party always consider problems from a perspective; democratic parties can consider from another perspective and present their ideas. Thus more problems can be reflected and the problems are also solved more completely, which is more favorable for making decisions; and the formulation of policies will be more appropriate; even if the problem occurs, it is relatively easy to correct" (Deng Xiaoping 1989, p. 272–273).

Shortly after the founding of New China, the Communist Party of China attached great importance to handle the relationship with the democratic parties; the important role of political consultation system was played; and contradictions between the Communist Party and the democratic parties were handled properly. During the period from the founding of the People's Republic of China to the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, 12 sessions of 4 CPPCC National Committees were held. They conducted political consultations for organizing democratic parties, people's organizations and ethnic groups to participate in politics, as well as large state policies and important issues of people's life, and played an important role through democratic supervision by suggestions and criticisms.

Unfortunately, before the Cultural Revolution broke out, the "leftist" thought in the Party began to spread. In May 1964, the CPC Central Committee held a working meeting, Mao Zedong pointed out at the meeting that revisionism might occur in China and criticized the Central United Front Work Department. He said: "The United Front Work Department should deal with domestic bourgeoisie, but some people in it do not advocate class struggle," "They want to make bourgeois parties become the socialist political Party, and have created a five-year plan; they are weak; they want to surrender to the bourgeoisie". The Central United Front Work Department Minister Li Weihan was repeatedly criticized and was dismissed from his post.

3.1.4 Establishing the Regional Ethnic Autonomy System

The system of regional autonomy for ethnic minorities is another basic political system in China. That is, regional autonomy is practiced in areas, where people of minority nationalities live in concentrated communities; in these areas, organs of self-government are established to exercise the power of autonomy.

It has always been advocated by the Communist Party of China to insist on equality of all ethnic groups and strengthen national unity. In the period of new democratic revolution, the ethnic regional autonomy system in line with Chinese conditions was explored on the revolutionary base. In May 1941, the *Shanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Program* issued by Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region government provided:

"Based on the principles of ethnic equality, implement equal rights of Mongolian, Hui and Han politically, economically and culturally; establish the Mongolian and Hui ethnic autonomous region". In October 1945, the CPC Central Committee pointed out in the directive

about working policies of Inner Mongolia: “The basic principles of Inner Mongolia are to implement regional ethnic autonomy at present”. On May 1, 1947, before the founding of New China, the first provincial-level ethnic autonomous region—Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was established.

Before and after the founding of New China, the Communist Party of China started immediately to study the establishment of a democratic political system in ethnic minority areas. In preparations for the CPPCC in 1949, Mao Zedong asked Li Weihan for his advice on whether to implement federalism. After research, Li Weihan thought that Chinese conditions were different from those of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR); it was not suitable to implement federalism in China. The form of unitary state structure was suitable for the reality in China, and the implementation of regional autonomy for ethnic minorities within a unified country was more conducive to realizing the principle of ethnic equality. The CPC Central Committee adopted his opinion.⁵ In September 1949, Zhou Enlai pointed out when he made the speech about a few issues on the CPPCC to the CPPCC delegates: “Today the imperialists want to split Tibet, Taiwan and even Xinjiang; in this case, we hope that all ethnic groups do not listen to the provocation of imperialists. For this purpose, the name of our country is the People’s Republic of China, not Federation. Although we are not a federal state, we advocate regional ethnic autonomy and exercise the powers of national autonomy” (Zhou Enlai 1984b, p. 140).

In August 1952, the Eighteenth Meeting of the Central People’s Government Committee approved the Program for the Implementation of Ethnic Regional Autonomy of the People’s Republic of China. It provided autonomous organs of various ethnic groups are local governments of level 1 under the unified leadership of the Central People’s Government and are led by the people’s government at the higher level. In accordance with autonomous powers, independent regulations must be formulated for implementation in various ethnic autonomous regions. The program also provided the authority of developing economy and finance, as well as the principles in the development of culture, education, art and health of the ethnic minority in the autonomous region.

In 1954, the Constitution clarified the legal status of regional ethnic autonomy according to the fundamental law of the country. The regional ethnic autonomy system is an integral part of the Chinese political system; after the test of practice, it was proven to be in line with Chinese conditions. The regional ethnic autonomy system protected the equality of all ethnic groups and completely changed the serious estrangement and even mutual discrimination among various ethnic groups in old China. The ethnic regional autonomy promoted economic development and cultural heritage in ethnic minority areas and fully protected the legitimate rights and interests of ethnic minorities. Under the premise of ensuring national unity, the implementation of regional ethnic autonomy could help combine the feelings of love of people of all nationalities for the unification of their motherland with those

⁵Compiled by the United Front Work Department of CPC Central Committee: Collected Documents of Ethnic Minority Problems, the Central Party School Press, 1991, p. 10.

for their own ethnic group, which was conducive to maintain unity and prosperity of the country and resisting foreign aggression, differentiation and subversion.

After the founding of new China, it took only more than two years to establish 130 ethnic autonomous areas at various levels across the country. After the promulgation of the Constitution, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region was established in October 1955; after that, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region in October 1958; Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in December 1958 and Tibet Autonomous Region in September 1965.



On October 1, 1955, people from all ethnic groups sang and danced to celebrate the establishment of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region

After the founding of New China, under the leadership of the CPC, the Chinese people made various efforts in building a democratic socialist system: In 1954, the Constitution laid legal foundation for Chinese democratic system, and gradually established the people's congress system, the multi-Party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the CPC and the regional ethnic autonomy system; they constituted the basic institutional framework of the democratic politics in New China.

Mao Zedong made a great contribution to the establishment of a socialist democratic political system in New China. He devoted himself to the establishment of Chinese socialist democratic system and the birth of the first constitution of New China. However, the democratic ideas of Mao Zedong had certain one-sidedness and defects. He emphasized centralism, but ignored democracy; legal system was imperfect; various resolutions of the party were emphasized, but legal norms were

ignored. Especially in his later years, he ignored the state laws and failed to abide by the laws, which ultimately led to the Cultural Revolution. The outbreak of the Cultural Revolution had profound causes, in which the destruction of democracy and the rule of law was the important cause. *The Resolution on Several Issues in the History of the Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China* stated that: "The top Party leader acted more and more arbitrarily and subjectively, and increasingly put himself above the Central Committee of the Party. The result was a steady weakening and even undermining of the principle of collective leadership and democratic centralism in the political life of the Party and the country." "And for various historical reasons, we failed to institutionalize and legalize inner-Party democracy and democracy in the political and social life of the country, or we drew up the relevant laws but they lacked due authority. This meant that conditions were present for the over-centralization of Party power in individuals and for the development of arbitrary individual rule and the personality cult in the Party. Thus, it was hard for the Party and State to prevent the initiation of the Cultural Revolution or check its development."⁶

The Cultural Revolution destroyed the rule of law; National People's Congress and local People's Congress across the country lost the functions of the highest authority. The organs of the CPPCC National Committee stopped work temporarily; the democratic parties and the Federation of Industry and Commerce had to stop their activities; civil rights could not be protected, which resulted in a huge setback of democracy politics.

3.2 Historical Turning Point of the Reform and Opening Up

Many people believed that the most important significance of the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee was the economic reform in China. In fact, Chinese political reform and economic reform started synchronously.

3.2.1 *Setting Things Right and Drawing Up the Blueprint for Political Reform*

In October 1978, a profound change of Chinese history would start. As the chief designer of Chinese reform, Deng Xiaoping realized that it was impossible to achieve Chinese modernization only by the economic system reform. Political reform must be implemented, but Chinese political reform was a complex project, so it must be implemented in a gradual manner. Deng Xiaoping appealed loudly if reform was not implemented, "Our modernization and socialist cause will be

⁶Resolution on Certain Issues in the History of the Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China, People's Publishing House, 1981, pp. 32–33.

ruined” (Deng Xiaoping 1994, p. 150). At the same time, he stressed that reforms must be gradual, “The political system is very complex and each measure involves the interests of thousands of people, so the reform of political system should be implemented in an orderly manner step by step under the leadership” (Deng Xiaoping 1993a, p. 252).

In October 1978, Deng Xiaoping pointed out in his speech at the Ninth National People’s Congress of Chinese Trade Unions: It is a revolution to achieve four modernizations; “If the revolution will drastically change the current backward productive forces, it is necessary to change production relations, superstructure, management modes of industrial and agricultural enterprises and management modes of the country for industrial and agricultural enterprises in many aspects, so that they can adapt to the needs of large modern economy” (Deng Xiaoping 1994b, p. 135–136). On December 13, 1978, Deng Xiaoping re-emphasized in *Emancipating the Mind, Seeking Truth from Facts and Uniting as One in Looking Forward to the Future*: “Reform production relations and superstructure incompatible with the rapid development of the productive forces correctly”.⁷

The 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee fully affirmed the necessity of reform. It pointed out in the communique: “It requires significant improvement of productivity to achieve four modernizations, and also requires the changing of production relations and superstructure incompatible with the development of productivity and all inappropriate modes of management, activity and thinking, so it is an extensive and profound revolution”.⁸



The 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee

⁷Deng Xiaoping: “Emancipating the Mind, Seeking Truth from Facts, and Looking Forward in Unity”, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 2), People’s Publishing House, 1994, p. 141.

⁸“The Communique of the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee”, *People’s Daily*, December 24, 1978.

In August 1980, Deng Xiaoping made a speech at an enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee: *The Reform of the Party and State's Leadership System*. In his speech, Deng Xiaoping summarized the profound lessons of the Cultural Revolution and analyzed the drawbacks of existing political system and its causes. He also analyzed the necessity of political reform. Deng Xiaoping said that: "To take full advantage of the superiority of socialism, we should work hard now and for some time to come to achieve the following three major objectives: (1) In the economic sphere, to rapidly develop the productive forces and gradually improve the people's material and cultural life. (2) In the political sphere, to practice people's democracy to the full, ensuring that through various effective forms, all the people truly enjoy the right to manage state affairs and particularly state organs at the grass-roots level and to run enterprises and institutions, and that they truly enjoy all the other rights of citizens; to perfect the revolutionary legal system; to handle contradictions among the people correctly; to crack down on all hostile forces and criminal activities; and to arouse the enthusiasm of the people and consolidate and develop a political situation marked by stability, unity and liveliness. (3) In the organizational sphere, if we are to achieve these objectives, there is an urgent need to discover, train, employ and promote a large number of younger cadres upholding the Four Cardinal Principles and having professional knowledge for socialist modernization."⁹

At the 12th CPC National Congress, the CPC Central Committee carried out extensive and in-depth investigations and studies on the reform of political system. In October 1986, the CPC Central Committee established a discussion group for political reform and carried out repeated study and discussion on the evolution, advantages and disadvantages of the political system, aims, objectives, contents, procedures and basic principles of reform; the overall vision for the political system reform was formed finally.

In the study of the political reform, the opinions denying the socialist system and advocating capitalist democracy appeared in the society. In 1979, Deng Xiaoping made an important speech on *Upholding the Four Cardinal Principles* and pointed out solemnly in respect of the experiences and lessons from the Cultural Revolution: We should understand the building of socialist democracy as an important issue affecting the success or failure of socialism and expound that socialist democracy is the essential requirement of socialism and that the relationship between the building of democratic politics and the realization of socialist modernization. Deng Xiaoping pointed out: "Departure from the four cardinal principles and talk about democracy in the abstract will inevitably lead to the unchecked spread of ultra-democracy and anarchism, to the complete disruption of political stability and unity, and to the total failure of our modernization programme."¹⁰ Our system is the system of the People's

⁹Deng Xiaoping "The Reform of the Party and State Leadership System", Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Vol. 2), People's Publishing House, 1994, p. 322, 336.

¹⁰Deng Xiaoping: "Upholding the Four Cardinal Principles", Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Vol. 2), People's Publishing House, 1994, p. 176.

Congress. It is the People's democracy system under the leadership of the CPC. We cannot do those in the mode of the Western countries."¹¹

Deng Xiaoping's series of speeches systematically expounded the purpose, meaning, main content of political reform and principles that it must follow; a more complete basic idea of political reform was formed. The most important points of Deng Xiaoping's thinking on political reform included: to realize modernization, we must promote democracy and mobilize the enthusiasm of the people; we must ensure institutionally the practice of democracy in political life, in economic management and in all other aspects of social activity; we must uphold the four cardinal principles unequivocally and do not implement the Western-style democracy.

3.2.2 Four Reforms in the 1980s

In the early years of the reform and opening up, problems left over from the old system is very prominent. Firstly, cadres could not adapt to the new situation of reform and opening up; secondly, the old administrative system was not conducive to mobilizing the enthusiasm of the people; great democracy accumulated for many years was not conducive to the formation of the political situation of stability and unity. These problems must be addressed before the reform is implemented.

(a) Abolishing Lifetime Tenure of Cadres

It needs a large number of talents urgently to realize four modernizations; lifetime tenure of cadres becomes a real problem affecting the training and use of new generation of cadres. The lifetime tenure of leading cadres has been a problem troubling the international communist movement. It is contrary to the regularity of development of human physiology and thought; it is not conducive to the normal replacement of cadres and advancing of the ruling ideology with the times. After the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, under the active promotion of the second generation of collective leadership by regarding Deng Xiaoping as the core, the Communist Party of China solved this problem relatively successfully. While the lifetime tenure of cadres was abolished, the reform of and personnel system for cadres was also carried out rapidly, mainly in the aspects: implement the cadre retirement system; abolish the "lifetime tenure" of cadres existing actually; at the same time, promote "Four reforms of cadres", namely the so-called "More revolutionary, younger in average age, better educated and professionally more competent"; promote the generation of young cadres supporting the reform and opening up line to leadership positions at all levels so as to provide organizational guarantee for the new line of CPC.

¹¹ Deng Xiaoping: "Faster Pace of Reform", Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Vol. 3), People's Publishing House, 1993, p. 240.

(b) Abolishing the People's Commune System

On January 1, 1982, the CPC Central Committee approved and forwarded the Minutes of National Rural Work Conference and fully affirmed the contract responsibility system, which reflected the strong desire of hundreds of millions of farmers for the development of agriculture according to the actual situation in China. The household contract responsibility system was popularized in rural areas, and the system of integration of government administration with commune management that had been implemented for 20 years could no longer meet the development needs of rural productive forces. The system of integration of government administration with commune management first appeared in the agricultural cooperative process, and its appearance had the spontaneous nature. It was implemented for the purpose of streamlining administration at the grassroots level. But when the people's commune movement was launched by the central collective leadership represented by Mao Zedong, it was endowed with the implication for promoting the demolishment of the state and transition to communism. As the organ of political power at a particular level, people's commune was obliged to obey the administrative instructions at a higher level; as the economic organ at a particular level, people's communes had certain powers to mobilize the labor forces in the commune. This system with both administrative and economic functions was described as "integration of government administration with commune management", and its important drawbacks were interference of "economy" by "politics".

After the household contract responsibility system was implemented and the state reduced the scope of state monopoly for purchase and marketing of agricultural products, the agricultural surplus collection by the state evolved into the collection by quotas and the unpaid allocation of rural labor forces by the state was increasingly reduced and even completely abolished. The security function of the system of integration of government administration with commune management no longer played its designed role. In such case, the collapse of the system of integration of government administration with commune management was inevitable. In April 1980, Xiangyang Township in Guanghan County of Sichuan Province first removed the plaque of the people's commune and divided the commune into the township government and the township integrated farm-industry-commerce corporation. In October 1983, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council jointly issued the *Notice on Separation of Government Administration and Commune Management and Establishment of Township Government* and restored township governments in rural areas throughout the country, namely restoring the township government and separating government administration from economic management. In November 1987, the 23rd meeting of the Standing Committee of the 6th National People's Congress adopted the Organic Law of the Villagers Committee of the People's Republic of China (for Trial Implementation), which was enacted on a trial basis on June 1, 1988. The village committees were established universally in the rural areas at the grassroots level across the country. Since then, a new political model, "Township-government and Village Self-governance", appeared in the rural areas below the county-level in China. The significance of abolishing the people's

commune system was the change from “integration of government administration with commune management” to separation of politics from economy, thus providing political channels for the economic and social reform in China.

(b) Streamlining Administration and Delegating Power

Highly centralized economic system and administrative system were established in the large-scale economic development by copying experiences of the USSR in the period of the “First Five-year Plan” in China. This system had an irreplaceable role in the centralization of limited resources in important construction and establishing an independent and relatively complete industrial system and national economic system in a relatively short period of time, but its drawbacks were also obvious; the most obvious drawback was that it was not conducive to mobilizing enthusiasm, initiative and creativity of local and grassroots institutions; it restrained their role in allocation of resources and coordination of interests.

After the reform and opening up, the strategic objective of Chinese economic development has changed gradually; its goal shifted from the focus on the establishment of an independent and complete industrial system to the improvement of people’s living standards and enhancing overall national strength as the core. In this case, the highly centralized economic system and administrative system were increasingly unsuitable to the needs of development of productive forces, so the new decentralization was inevitable. In December 1978, before the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, Deng Xiaoping stressed at the Central Work Conference that the economic democracy should be developed, particularly the expansion of autonomy of industrial enterprises and production teams so as to mobilize the enthusiasm of the state, local governments, enterprises and individual workers. Deng Xiaoping also pointed out in the speech on *the Reform of Leadership System of the Party and the State* that the biggest shortcoming of the original system was the excessive centralization of power and he re-emphasized the problem of decentralization.

The significance of decentralization was that the change of constraints, caused by excessive centralization, on enthusiasm of local agencies, production companies and producers under the conditions of the planned economy. On the one hand, the market was opened; it was the precursor that the market economy was eventually implemented; on the other hand, it mobilized the initiative of local governments for promoting economic development to ease restrictions on local governments by the central government, so a very unique and important phenomenon—intergovernmental competition in the reform and opening up and economic development was formed in China, namely governments at all levels spared no effort to work for promoting local economic development, which formed another major source of power of Chinese economic development outside the market.

(c) Abolishing the “Four Freedoms” and Restoring the Rule of Law

At the important preparatory meeting—the central work conference held in 1978 before the Third Plenary Session of 11th CPC Central Committee, Deng Xiaoping highlighted the problem of democracy. Deng Xiaoping pointed out: “Democracy is

an important condition for liberation of thought.” And how to implement democracy? He said: “In order to protect the people’s democracy, the rule of law must be strengthened. Democracy must be institutionalized and legalized, so that such system and law will not change because of changes of leaders; and will not change due to changes of views and attention of leaders. The problem is that the law is not complete now. Many laws have not been enacted. What the leaders said was always regarded as ‘law’; behavior of disagreement with what the leaders said was described as ‘illegal’; what the leaders said changes, the ‘law’ will also change” (Deng Xiaoping 1994a, p. 146). Deng Xiaoping regarded the establishment of the rule of law as the basic prerequisite and guarantee of the democratic political construction.

Speaking out freely, airing views fully, writing big-character Posters and holding great debates, known as “four freedoms”, started in the anti-rightist struggle in 1957. It had been regarded as an important form of promoting socialist democracy by Mao Zedong; it had been applied in previous political movements and was played to the extreme in the Cultural Revolution. “Four freedoms” was confirmed as the fundamental law of the country by Constitution for the first time in 1975. Constitution inherited it in 1978. Since Chinese reform and opening up, the construction of democratic politics began from the reflection of “Cultural Revolution” and correction of its mistakes. The most serious problem and failure of “Cultural Revolution” are the destruction of the rule of law; there is no doubt that Deng Xiaoping was influenced greatly. Deng Xiaoping said: “Implement ‘great democracy’ in the Cultural Revolution; it is thought that inciting the people is the democracy; in fact, the inciting of people is to start civil war. We know the lessons of history” (Deng Xiaoping 1993c, p. 200). It can be said that restoration and development of the rule of law is the starting point of the exploration of new democratic politics by Deng Xiaoping.

3.2.3 Establishing the Grassroots-Level Self-Governance System

In contemporary China’s four basic political systems, the grassroots-level self-governance system was formed and established after Chinese reform and opening up; it should be said that it was the product of reform and opening up. The self-governance system at grassroots level means that urban and rural residents jointly manage their own affairs within the framework of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China under the leadership of the CPC and its grassroots organizations. The self-governance organizations at the grassroots level are democratically elected by the rural and urban residents. They realize democratic decision making, democratic management and democratic supervision and exercise related political rights directly. It is an important achievement of the democratic politics to implement self-governance system at the grassroots level and expand democracy of grassroots since the reform and opening up.

The self-governance organization of urban residents appeared in the early days after the founding of China. The people spontaneously organized protection teams,

security teams and residents groups in some cities. The fourth meeting of the 1st Session of the National People's Congress held in December 1954 promulgated and issued the Organization Regulations of Urban Residents Committee; the nature, status and role of the residents committee were affirmed in the legal form. Until the end of 1956, the urban residents committees had been established in various cities across the country. Since the reform and opening up, urban residents committee as the self-governance organization of residents was restored and developed. In January 1980, the NPC Standing Committee re-announced the *Organic Regulations of the Urban Residents Committee, Interim General Rules of People's Mediation Committee and Interim General Rules of Public Security Committee*. The nature, mission and role of the residents committee were defined by the 1982 Constitution as the fundamental law for the first time: "The residents committees and villagers committees established among urban and rural residents on the basis of their place of residence are mass organization of self-management at the grass-roots level. The chairman, vice-chairmen and members of each residents or villagers committee are elected by the residents. The relationship between the residents and villagers committees and the grass-roots organs of state power is prescribed by law. The residents and villagers committees establish sub-committees for people's mediation, public security, public health and other matters in order to manage public affairs and social services in their areas, mediate civil disputes, help maintain public order and convey residents' opinions and demands and make suggestions to the people's government." To fully safeguard the self-governance and democratic rights of urban residents, the 11th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress adopted the Organic Regulations of the Urban Residents Committee on December 26, 1989, after years' study and summary of the experience and lessons from the Organic Regulations of the Residents Committee.

The self-governance organizations of rural residents appeared after the contract responsibility system was implemented. After the implementation, the unification of government and commune was abolished; the people's commune was replaced by the township government. How to implement the management of rural grassroots adapting to the new forms of agricultural production organizations became an important problem. However, the organizations of village-level in many regions were disorganized; nobody was responsible for public affairs; various problems began to spread.

The farmers in some areas spontaneously established self-governance organizations to achieve self-management. On February 5, 1980, under a big camphor tree that it takes five people to encircle its trunk, 85 representatives of farmers from Guozuo Production Team under Hezhai Production Team of Yishan Sancha Commune in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region formed a new village management organization by secret ballot—the villagers committee. The villagers committee formulated the village regulations and rules and was responsible for the public affairs of the village. The self-governance organizations of farmers were also established in Luo Cheng County in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Some were called the "Village Security Leading Team", and some were called the "Village Management Committee". Since the spring of 1981, they were renamed the villag-

ers committee in a unified way. This experience soon attracted the repercussions, and many places in the country began to follow suit.

The 1982 Constitution defined the legal status of the villagers committee and specified its nature, tasks and organizational principles. After the promulgation of the Constitution, the villagers committees were established throughout the country. The villagers committees were generally established on the basis of the former production teams, and the villagers groups were established on the basis of the production teams. In 1983, while the township governments were established, the villagers committees were established generally throughout the country. After the twenty-third meeting of the 6th NPC Standing Committee adopted the *Organic Law of the Villagers Committees of the People's Republic of China (For Trial Implementation)* in 1987, a lot of innovation was carried out in the practice of democratic elections in accordance with the law in many regions, and the election modes were changed from single-candidate election to multicandidate election, from indirect election to direct election and from public voting to secret ballot. In election mode from single-candidate election to multicandidate election, from indirect election to direct election and from public vote to secret ballot was achieved.

In the 1980s, the rural population accounted for more than 80 % of the population in China. The establishment of the self-governance system of rural residents realized the self-management, self-education, self-service and self-monitoring of exercising their rights fully, which promoted the development of rural economy and public welfare, as well as the social stability. The stable development in rural areas laid the foundation for the stable development of social economy in China. Deng Xiaoping said many times: Democracy is to mobilize the enthusiasm of the people and grassroots. He said when he met with foreign guests in 1987: "It is the largest democracy to mobilize the enthusiasm. The forms of democracy depend on the actual situation" (Deng Xiaoping 1993b, p. 242). "Decentralization of the power to the grassroots means decentralization to farmers in rural areas, which is the largest democracy" (Deng Xiaoping 1993a, p. 252, Chapter 3).

References

- Deng Xiaoping. (1989). The party members must be subject to supervision. In *Selected works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 1). People's Publishing House.
- Deng Xiaoping. (1993a). Everything from the realities of the primary stage of socialism. In *Selected works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 3). People's Publishing House
- Deng Xiaoping. (1993b). Faster pace of reform. In *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 3). People's Publishing House.
- Deng Xiaoping. (1993c). Strengthening the four basic principles of education, persist in reform and opening up policy. In *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 3). People's Publishing House.
- Deng Xiaoping. (1994a). Emancipating the mind, seeking truth from facts, and looking forward in unity. In *Selected works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 2). People's Publishing House.
- Deng Xiaoping. (1994b). *The working class should make outstanding contributions to the four modernizations*. In *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 2). People's Publishing House.

- Liu Zheng. (2002). Main forms of democratic governance in the early days of the founding of China. National People's Congress of China, Issue 9.
- Mao Zedong. (1999). On the ten major relationships. In *Collected Works of Mao Zedong* (Vol. 7). People's Publishing House.
- Marx K., & Engels, F. (1972). The Communist Manifesto. In *Selected Works of Marx and Engels* (Vol. 1). People's Publishing House.
- Mao Zedong. (1991). On new democracy. In *Selected works of Mao Zedong* (Vol. 2), People's Publishing House.
- Zhou Enlai. (1984a). Long-term coexistence, mutual supervision. In *Selected Works of united front of Zhou Enlai*. People's Publishing House.
- Zhou Enlai. (1984b). Several Issues on the CPPCC. In *Selected Works from Zhou Enlai about United Front*. People's Publishing House.

Chapter 4

Characteristics of Chinese Democracy: Unification of Protecting Rights and Centralizing Power

Democracy is a social process needing continuous construction and development. After long-term repeated practice and exploration, on the basis of continuous summary of experiences and lessons of China and learning from international experiences and lessons, how to build and develop democratic politics in contemporary China has finally been answered and solved, which needs to unify and coordinate the safeguarding of people's rights and centralizing of state power in the implementation of Chinese political system and all democratic political practices. The unification of protecting people's rights and centralizing state power is the basic characteristic of contemporary Chinese democracy and the most important experience achieved in the practice of Chinese democracy.

4.1 Discovering the Basic Rules of Construction of Chinese Democracy

Democratic politics can be described as ideals and pursuit of Chinese society for centuries. Countless people with lofty ideals have made unremitting efforts for it. Chinese Communists regard the construction and development of democratic politics as their responsibility. But the way of exploring democratic politics by Chinese people is long and winding. The practice of Chinese Communists is tough and repetitive. From the perspective of political practice and institution building, reviewing the pursuit of democracy in China for centuries and the way of exploring democracy by the Chinese Communists, the core problem is not the value of democracy itself, but the concrete form of realization of democratic values. Whether the political forms and institutional arrangements of the sovereignty of the people-reflecting democratic values significantly can be built or not is another core problem. In terms of the level of contemporary political science and knowledge, we have recognized the inherent contradiction of democracy-antagonism between value and form.

Therefore, we clearly recognized: the essence of democracy and political construction is to find a political form of maximizing the value of democracy, overcome and reduce the contradictions between democratic values and forms to the utmost extent. The rules of the construction of democratic politics lie in the unification of democratic values and specific form.

4.1.1 Confusion of Practice: “Democracy” or “Centralism”

In establishing the state power and the socialist system and implementing democratic politics under the conditions of governance, the problems that democracy practitioners faced was not as simple as “Everyone is responsible” envisaged when the power was not obtained in the period of the Revolutionary War. Does the politics of “Everyone is responsible” directly mean democracy? If it does not mean a form of government that could be implemented, but merely a political principle or democratic political principle; how to form and establish a set of democratic institutional systems in practice became an important problem the founders and builders of New China needed to solve.

Represented by Mao Zedong, Chinese communists converted the sovereignty of the people, the concept with strong academic colors from the West, into a Chinese-style popularized expression: the people are the masters. In the political terms in the beginning of the founding of new China, “liberation” and “deliverance” were political symbolic vocabulary used frequently. The value targets of democracy, yearning and pursuit for democratic politics soon became concrete political behavior with the establishment of People’s Republic of China and further formed institutional arrangements. After democracy became concrete, differences and conflicts between democratic principles and implementation forms appeared gradually and became problems to be solved, and further appeared as a pair of contradictions.

On October 24, 1949, Mao Zedong said in a conversation: “China has been owned by the people, and everything belongs to the people. We should be responsible for anything and manage them well” (Mao Zedong 1999a, p. 14). It was only three weeks after the founding ceremony was held that Mao Zedong had felt the responsibility as a leader. In principle, things in China are “The people are the masters”, in fact “We should be responsible for anything and manage them well”. Soon after the Communist Party of China became the ruling Party, the leaders of the Communist Party of China felt the inherent contradictions of democratic politics — the contradiction between value and form; its performance was the contradiction between “sovereignty” of the people in representative system and “right of administration” of agents. The expression of inherent contradictions between value and form of democratic politics in the international communist movement and the discourse system of Marxism was as follows: Contradiction between democracy and centralism. When the People’s Republic of China was newly established, the national leadership had felt the trade-off between democracy and centralism.

In early 1956, in Ten Major Relationships, known as the “First Important Book” for exploring the road of building socialism suitable for Chinese conditions, Mao Zedong pointed out: “In order to build a powerful socialist country, there must be a strong unified central leadership; there must be the unified plan and discipline of the country; it is not allowed to destroy this essential unity” (Mao Zedong 1986, pp. 730–731). This reflected that in the early days of the founding of new China, Mao Zedong and other leaders inclined to “centralism” in the construction of democratic institution and democratic politics, namely they placed more emphasis on the centralization of the central and governments at all levels.

However, the situation underwent major changes soon after 1956. It is described as “troubled times” in 1956 by Mao Zedong. In this year, major events happened in the USSR and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. In the first half of 1956, the 20th congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was convened. After the closing of the meeting, Khrushchev held a secret meeting to expose and criticize Stalin comprehensively. In the second half of 1956, Poland Poznan event and Hungary event happened. These events in the USSR and Eastern Europe caused a high degree of vigilance and attention of China. Mao Zedong did not deal with the events in the USSR and Eastern Europe on their merits, but put forward his theoretical explanation. He said: “The basic problem is that class struggle is not implemented well in some countries in Eastern Europe. Many counter-revolutionaries were not eliminated. The proletariat was not trained in the class struggle; they could not distinguish friends from foes, right from wrong and idealism from materialism.” For the reasons of the event in Hungary, Mao Zedong concluded: “Bureaucracy; separation from the people; wrong industrial policy; wages were reduced; capitalists simply were overthrown; intellectuals were not transformed; counterrevolutionaries were not suppressed”.¹ In the second half of 1956, fluctuations in the economy and social unrest also took place in China. Mao Zedong believed that this was caused by bureaucracy of cadres and separation from the people; and he thought that the people had reasons to “dismiss” bureaucratic cadres.

In February 1957, Mao Zedong made a speech entitled *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People* at the eleventh meeting of the Supreme State Conference. The important speech was a theoretical summary of events at home and abroad since 1956; it put forward the doctrine for distinguishing two different types of contradictions and handling contradictions among the people correctly. Since then, Mao Zedong transformed his thought from more emphasis on “centralism” to “democracy”. Mao Zedong’s basic idea was: Use democratic methods to solve contradictions among the people. During this period, he put forward the problem of “Small democracy” and “Great democracy”. “Small democracy” meant rectification, which adopted the way of criticism and self-criticism to resolve contradictions among the people. The so-called Great democracy was interest expression activity beyond the normal order, for example, strikes, demonstrations and so on. For the “Great democracy”, Mao Zedong also took a positive and tolerant attitude.

¹From Biography of Mao Zedong (1949–1976) (Vol. 1), Central Party Literature Press, 2003, pp. 606–607.

He pointed out: “Great democracy” was a complementary method to overcome contradictions among the people and adjusted the social order. The so-called “four freedoms” appeared in 1957: Speaking out freely, airing view fully, writing big-character posters and holding great debates were affirmed by Mao Zedong enthusiastically. He described them as a revolutionary form created by the people and a form of people struggle; he believed that these forms gave full play to the socialist democracy. After 1957, Mao Zedong’s democratic ideas transferred from the relative balance between “democracy” and “centralism” in democratic centralism in the early days of the founding of new China or from inclining to “centralism” to “democracy” gradually, and went to the “great democracy” in the “Cultural Revolution” finally.



In February 1957, Mao Zedong made a speech titled “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People”.

Mao Zedong increasingly tended to “democracy”, which was closely related to the continuous development of his socialism theory. This theory eventually developed into “The Theory of Continuing the Revolution under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat”. At the third Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee in 1957, Mao Zedong asserted: “There is no doubt that the contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and that between the socialist road and the capitalist road are the principal contradictions in Chinese society currently”. After the 20th Congress of the CPSU, Khrushchev completely negated Stalin; and Sino-Soviet relations broke up, so that Mao Zedong increasingly believed that revisionism was the main threat to Chinese socialist cause; and the main danger of revisionism was mainly because that “Revisionism comes from the Central Government”. As time went on, the task of “Opposing and preventing revisionism” increasingly became a major pressure in Mao Zedong’s Thought. As the difference between him and other

major leaders in the Party appeared,² he finally picked up the weapon of “Great democracy” and started the unprecedented “Cultural revolution”.

The “Great democracy” in the “Cultural Revolution” is a populist politics. Populist politics has distinct characteristics: Firstly, pursue the purely civilian values, namely the interests of the grassroots are the most important, or even the only value. Mao Zedong even said: Noble people are the most stupid; humble people are the most intelligent. Secondly, the destruction of all existing rules, one of the most resounding slogans in the “Cultural Revolution” was that “Rebellion is justified”. Why was rebellion justified? Because various rules and prohibitions constrained the people and protected the “bourgeois” and “revisionist”, they must be completely “smashed”. Thirdly, the extreme tendency, the social psychological performance of populist politics was that political movement was driven and led by the most radical social emotions; more radical ideas and more extreme slogans could attract the people and led the trend.

The final result of “Great democracy” in the “Cultural Revolution” was the complete destruction of the social order; and finally it failed. People often quoted what Winston Churchill said: Democracy is not the best, but it can avoid the worst result. In fact, this is wrong. This judgment cannot stand the test of history. The “Great democracy” in “Cultural Revolution” caused the most serious results; it went in the opposite direction and denied itself. This phenomenon is not uncommon in the history of the world. American scholar Schramm evaluated the “Cultural Revolution” tartly: “The irony is: ‘Cultural Revolution’ started from manifestos in favor of the Paris Commune model of mass democracy, closed with paeans of praise to the centralizing despot Qin Shihuang” (Schramm 2005, p. 203).

4.1.2 Reflection on the “Cultural Revolution”: Balance Between “Democracy” and “Rule of Law”

After the frustration of “Cultural Revolution”, democratic political construction struggled to restart in China. On the basis of summarizing lessons from the Cultural Revolution, under the new historical conditions of implementing reform and opening up, a new exploration began, which was led by Deng Xiaoping.

The 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee was held from the end of 1978 to early 1979. It opened the new era that the mistakes of “Cultural Revolution” would be corrected and reform and opening up of the socialist road

²From the disclosure of historical information in recent years, the main difference between Mao Zedong and other main leaders of the Party, especially Liu Shaoqi, was the view of the nature of movement of “clear politics, clear economy, clear organization and clear thinking”. Liu Shaoqi, in charge of the work at the “front line”, thought that the nature of social conflicts reflected by “four-clearing” movement was the problem of “four-clearing” and “no four-clearing”, but Mao Zedong thought it was the problem of “two roads” and class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

would be explored again. And the re-exploration of democratic politics in new era started from the reflection on the “Cultural Revolution”. For “old cadres” who suffered political persecution in the “Cultural Revolution” and regained the control of political power after the “Cultural Revolution”, the biggest problem and lesson of “Cultural Revolution” was that the rule of law was undermined. Deng Xiaoping said: “it is thought that implementing ‘Great democracy’ in the ‘Cultural Revolution’ and inciting the people is the democracy; in fact, the inciting of people is to start civil war. We know the lessons of history” (Deng Xiaoping 1993a, pp. 199–200). At the important preparatory conference before the third plenary session of the 11th central committee of the Communist Party of China—the central work conference, Deng Xiaoping talked about the problem of democracy. At that time, the central political question was “Emancipating our minds”, which prepared for the implementation of new line of reform and opening up mentally. Deng Xiaoping put forward at the meeting that “democracy was an important condition for emancipation”; how to implement democracy? He further pointed out: “In order to protect people’s democracy, the rule of law must be strengthened. Democracy must be institutionalized and legalized, so that such system and law do not change because of changes of leaders, and do not change due to changes of views and attention of leaders. The problem is that the law is not complete now. Many laws have not been enacted. What the leaders said is always regarded as ‘law’; behavior of disagreement with what the leaders said is called ‘illegal’; what the leaders said changes, the ‘law’ will also change” (Deng Xiaoping 1994a, p. 146). Restoration and development of the socialist legal system became the starting point of the leadership of the Communist Party represented by Deng Xiaoping for new exploration of democratic politics.

4.1.3 *Exploration of Reform: Decentralization or Centralization*

Exploration of the construction of democratic politics focused on decentralization in the first 10 years of the reform and opening up, namely reducing the degree of centralization of power and improving the political status of the people, so that the society grasped more and greater power. The discussion in *Reform of Leadership System of the Party and the State*—programmatic document about Chinese political reform and democratic political construction put forward in the late summer of 1980 was the most classic; and it reflected the level of awareness of construction of democracy at the beginning of reform and opening up. Deng Xiaoping said: “In the aspect of the leadership system and cadre system of the Party and the state, the main drawbacks are the phenomenon of bureaucracy, excessive centralization of power, patriarchy, lifetime tenure in leading posts and all kinds of privileges” (Deng Xiaoping 1993b, p. 327).

Deng Xiaoping’s description reflected the awareness of the necessity of political system reform and reform targets at the beginning of reform and opening up. The core idea was decentralization and devolution of power, so that the power was close to “the peo-

ple". After a period of exploration, at the 13th CPC National Congress, Deng Xiaoping converted the target 7 years ago into concrete reform measures and institutional arrangements — separated the functions of the Party from those of the government and established social negotiation dialogue system. But soon it is found that there was problem of strategy of political system reform and democracy political construction in the 1980s.

Although the purpose of the separation of the Party from the government was described as "Strengthening the leadership of the Party" repeatedly in the design and implementation of the system, once the Party organization separated from the actual process of administrative and social management and economic development, the Party's leadership became hollow and weak; and moreover, the Party and government of the system itself was unified in the aspect of personnel arrangement for a long time. Firstly, the separation of the Party from the government encountered operational problems technically. Lay aside in practice and continue to declare politically, which caused social misleading to a certain degree; on the one hand, it resulted in the disappointment of social expectations, on the other hand, the forces of "liberalization" had an opposition excuse.

The political turmoil in 1989 changed the reform ideas of decentralization established in the 1980s. Chinese reality and the lessons from the USSR and Eastern European countries made the Chinese Communist leaders realize that the core problem of political system reform and democratic political construction was not that the power was given "back to" the society and "back to" the people; the idea was too romantic. The actual problem was that the ruling Party should control and make good use of the power; and the problem was the division, use, restriction and supervision of power. After the 1990s, the original loudest slogan of "Separation of the Party from the Government" quietly became "Separation of the function between the Party and the Government" in the field of Chinese political reform.

Since the exploration of democracy-building strategy returned to the starting point, it meant the problems that reform and construction faced must be first determined. The consensus in that year was: Power was too centralized; too centralized in the Party and the individual. Therefore, the objective of the reform was decentralization. The power was decentralized to the grassroots and the society. However, the practice showed that things were not so simple. Obviously there were many factors on democratic politics, such as relevant factors, premise and limiting factors. Objectives and strategy for the reform and construction should first begin from democratic political relevance in the future.

At the 15th CPC National Congress convened in September 1997, Jiang Zemin described the goal of political system reform and democratic political construction in the political report. The Communist Party of China determined relevant factors of political reform and democracy building and set reform parameters once again after 10 years. Jiang Zemin pointed out in the report that: "The promotion of the reform of political system must help enhance the vitality of the Party and the state, maintain and demonstrate the characteristics and advantages of the socialist system, safeguard national unification, ethnic unity and social stability, give full play to the enthusiasm of the people and promote the development of productive forces and social progress" (Jiang Zemin 2006a, p. 29).

Although the expression at the 15th National Congress was still not clear enough, it redefined the basic relevant factors of Chinese democratic construction, which were two functional requirements and a restrictive condition. Two functional requirements were as follows: Mobilize the enthusiasm of the people and promote the development of productive forces and social progress; a restrictive condition: protecting national unification, ethnic unity and social stability. Thus the basic framework of Chinese democratic political construction was established. Compared with the idea of democratic political construction in 1980s, it had been greatly adjusted. The idea in the 1980s focused on decentralization and devolution and the political field. Its inherent logic was led by the idea of sovereignty of the people and tried to establish a self-governance democratic political system with direct democracy meaning. The facts proved it was impossible to realize the idealized vision.

After repeated exploration, the Chinese people finally made a breakthrough in recognizing the practical form of democratic politics, namely the abstract sovereignty of the people was resolved into three elements in theory: rights, powers and methods, namely the principles of sovereignty of the people were theoretically divided into: protection of people's rights, exercise of people's power and their exercise methods. The dividing methods of sovereignty of the people conducted a theoretical explanation for conversion from the abstract political philosophy into the operational practice form; thus the sovereignty of the people was no longer an abstract principle; it was converted into practical problems that could be operated and implemented.

In July 1998, Jiang Zemin made a speech. He put forward the thought of "Three unification" preliminarily for the first time. Jiang Zemin pointed out: "If we promote the construction of socialist democratic politics, we must deal with the relationship among the leadership of the Party, promoting democracy and acting according to the law. It is important to be led by the Party. It is fundamental to promote democracy. It is the guarantee to act according to the law. They must not be separated and not opposed to each other. The political system reform must be carried out step by step in an orderly manner under the leadership of the Party. It is wrong to think that promoting democracy and emphasizing the rule of law don't need the Party's leadership. Meanwhile, the Party committees should learn to strengthen and improve the Party's leadership within the framework of the Constitution and the law. Leaders at all levels should dare to lead, be good at leading, give full play to democracy and act strictly according to the law" (Jiang Zemin 2002, p. 301). According to the literature available, this was the earlier summary and description of "Three Unities".

In the political report of the 16th CPC National Congress in 2002, the official statement about "Three Unities" was: "The most fundamental thing of the development of socialist democratic politics is to unify the three aspects as follows: Adhere to the Party's leadership; the people are the masters and govern the country according to the law. The leadership of the Party is the fundamental guarantee that the people are the masters and the country is governed according to the law. People serving as the masters is the essential requirement of socialist democratic politics. It is the basic strategy for the Party to lead the people to govern the country according to the law" (Jiang Zemin 2006b, p. 553).

The unity of the Party’s leadership, the people being the masters and governing the country according to the law, namely the proposal of “Three unification”, was the discovery and understanding of the construction rules of contemporary democratic politics. It revealed the intrinsic relationship among elements of democratic politics at the present stage of Chinese industrialization and modernization development, and established practice rules for implementing democratic politics. Since the 16th CPC National Congress, “Three Unification” had always been stressed and was regarded as the key content of the road of socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics.³

4.2 Logic and Function of “Protecting Rights” and “Centralizing Power”

In the construction of socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics, “three unification” of adhering to the Party’s leadership, the people being the masters and governing the country according to law, and the implementation of the democratic politics in accordance with the requirements of “Three-unification” was one of the basic experiences obtained after the long-term exploration in the construction of democratic politics and also was the most important experience. In this aspect, analysis was carried out from political discourse system and academic discourse system.

4.2.1 Both Aspects and a Unification of the Party and the People: Political Semantics of “Three-Unification”: Unification of Adhering to the Party’s Leadership, the People Being Masters and Governing the Country According to the Law

After repeated practice, the leadership of the Communist Party of China finally realized that substantive problems related to democracy and needing to be resolved in the aspect of the practice was the relationship between the Party and the people, namely the relationship between power and right. The core of political discourse of “Three-unification” meant the relationship between the Party and the people. The basic meaning of “Three-unification”, as a political term, was to summarize the relationship between the Party and the people from the double meaning of condition and purpose.

³Hu Jintao: “Speech at the Celebration Meeting of the Ninetieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Chinese Communist Party”, cpc. people. com. cn. <http://cpc.people.com.cn/90nian/GB/224164/15052968.html>

First of all, the Party was a prerequisite and necessary condition of the people. The people were sovereign and the subject of democratic politics. But from the significance of politics or social subject, the emergence and existence of the people were conditional. As a political concept, the people were the subject of historical action; and any subject having action ability must have self-awareness and organizational forms. Otherwise, the people can only exist as an idea, like French farmers, like “potatoes” as said by Marx in the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte or like “a tray of loose sand” that Chinese people were often described in modern Chinese history. The Communist Party gave the people self-awareness and consciousness. It was the Communist Party to organize the people. In a word, it was the Communist Party who made the people become the people. Further speaking, only the Communist Party organized and represented the people to grasp and exercise power, could it have real effectiveness.

Secondly, the people were the purpose of the Party. The Communists grasped and exercised the power on behalf of the people. The Communist Party was the people’s representative without any group interest and any of their own purpose. Therefore, all ruling behavior of the Communist Party was to “lead and support the people to be the masters” and serve the people. The Communist Party was the tool for achieving overall interests, long-term and fundamental interests of the people; in other words, the power grasped and exercised by the Communist Party on behalf of the people should be completely implemented in the realization of power and right of the people finally. Otherwise, alienation and deterioration of democracy would happen.

In a word, understand “Three Unification” from the political discourse; this connotation summarizing the relationship between the Party and the people gave a legal and legitimate explanation of contemporary Chinese political system and democracy.

4.2.2 Protecting Rights: Mobilize the Enthusiasm of the People

What is the value of a democratic political model? It depends on its functional performance. The practical functions of socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics mainly manifests in two aspects, namely due to “protection of rights”, the enthusiasm of the people can be mobilized, so that the process of industrialization and modernization can obtain social intrinsic motivation; and because of “centralization of power”, the strategic development can be implemented so that the construction of industrialization and modernization becomes more efficient. This is proven by the social historical leapfrog development of Chinese economy and society and China’s rise during the reform and opening up for more than 30 years.

The protection of people’s rights mobilized the enthusiasm, initiative and creativity of the Chinese people so that the Chinese industrialization and modernization process gained tremendous momentum.

140 years ago, the Meiji Restoration was implemented in Japan. It started the industrialization process for the first time. It was described in the basic program, the

Charter Oath of Japanese Meiji Restoration as follows: “The common people, civil and military officials, shall be allowed to pursue their own calling so that there may be no discontent”. The reform of the Meiji Restoration changed the traditional values of Japanese society through the “Equality of the Four Castes”, “Develop economy so that the national economy value can be increased” and others. It converted the idea from hereditary identity into the regarding of the education received and personal achievement as the standard for measuring the social value of the people. This reform greatly changed the value system of Japanese society and thus changed the social power system, so that Japanese society, especially the great power beyond any previous experience, was released from the folk; and the modern industrial system was established preliminarily in just 20 years, so Japan rose in the East.

Chinese reform and opening up was also a process of releasing civil power. Its social mechanism was as similar as the intrinsic motivation mechanism of Japan and those of the countries achieving industrialization successfully. The difference was that the scale of China was greater; policy was implemented more thoroughly, and ideology fitted policy measures better.

In the planned economy era before the reform and opening up, Chinese economy had also made significant progress; after nearly 30 years of endeavor, the industrialization system of the country was established preliminarily. However, the speed and quality of Chinese economic and social development before the reform and opening up was quite different from those after the reform. Observe from the perspective of social development power, the simple reasons were as follows: In the planned economy era before the reform and opening up, China mainly had an “enthusiasm”, namely the enthusiasm of the planning authority; but the enthusiasm of the subordinate and the society was restrained due to planning constraints, especially the enthusiasm and creativity of enterprises, as the basic economic institutions were almost suffocated. The most fundamental change brought by Chinese reform and opening up was the transformation of fundamental values of Chinese society, which further changed the power system of Chinese social development.

Since the 1980s and 1990s, the core social significance of implementation of reform and opening up and socialist market economy was that the restrictions on the politics, economy, society and others of the people were broken; the old value system that the social value was determined by family background and political attitudes was changed; and the educational selection system and economic access system with equal opportunities based on equal competition were formed. Changes in social values and formation of economic activity expectation were converted into universal social mobilization and huge intrinsic production power. By regarding the pursuit of a better life of happiness as the goal, hundreds of millions of people started the largest production and development activities in human history.

Since the reform and opening up, one of the most profound changes in Chinese society was the increase of social vitality and the change of the mental outlook of Chinese people. Hundreds of millions of Chinese people actively participated in the historical process of Chinese industrialization, urbanization and modernization. And this historical change came from the changes in social values and social expectation. Before the founding of New China, most Chinese people

were under constraint and oppression of the feudal land system and bureaucratic capitalist system. From the founding of New China to the reform and opening up, although most Chinese people gained equal status in politics and law, they were still constrained by the planned economy in economy and social status; they lack individual economic and social development opportunities. It was difficult to play their intrinsic motivation. The reform and opening up have great social significance. The restrictions on the identity of people began to be eliminated. The rights of the people's social economic freedom have been increased. Their rights can be guaranteed and protected. Especially with the removal of restrictions on identity of farmers accounting for the vast majority of Chinese population, Chinese people formed new social expectation—as long as they make efforts, they will get the chance of social mobility, identity change, and acquiring wealth. Thus, the enthusiasm of Chinese society development became the personal desire and impulse of hundreds of millions of people. Then Chinese society developed greatly; and Chinese economy developed rapidly.

Since the reform and opening up, Chinese society opened up economic freedom to the people, especially to the farmers in vast rural areas and protected the economic rights and interests of the people, which completely changed the mental state of the people and the social economic outlook. The number of private enterprises was almost zero in China before 1978. There were only few individual businesses. Almost all economic activities were controlled by the planning authority of the government. In 30 years since the reform and opening up, the entrepreneurial spirit of Chinese people grew rapidly. Until September 2012, the number of registered private enterprises in China exceeded 10 million, reached 10.598 million; the registered capital amounted to 29.8 trillion Yuan; the average registered capital amounted to 2.813 million Yuan; the total number of individual industrial and commercial businesses was close to 40 million in China over the same period, reaching 39.847 million; the total registered capital of individual industrial and commercial businesses amounted to 1.88 trillion Yuan. In 2012, the proportion of private economy in GDP exceeded 60 %.⁴ Chinese reform and opening up created the largest entrepreneurial activity in the human history of industrialization, which came from the economic freedom and opening and protection of rights. In the history of reform and opening up for more than 30 years, the most concrete, vivid and typical case was the rise of Yiwu, Zhejiang.

China has achieved leapfrog development since the reform and opening up 30 years ago. China has become the second largest economy in the world. The manufacturing industry is the advantage of Chinese economy in China, which is described as the “Factory of the world”. Western developed economic entities, such as the United States, Britain and other economic powers lead the trend of the world economy by the well-developed financial sector, and control the world

⁴“The Number of Registered Private Enterprises Exceeded 10 Million in China”, Xinhuanet, February 1, 2013. http://news.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2013-02/01/c_114587467.htm

economy. Various important “indices” for measuring economic and financial operation, such as New York “the Dow Jones 30 industrial average index”, “Nasdaq Composite Index”, “Chicago futures index” and other signs and symbols representing Western developed economic entities are very famous. Chinese economy is entering the forefront of the world; but now there is only an economic index of global significance in China; it is the “China Commodity Index” from the Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China, commonly known as the “Yiwu Index”. The economic index is collected and summarized from the Yiwu Small Commodity Market by the Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China every day. “Yiwu index” reflects the price level of the household goods of the world’s major markets to some extent.

However, the famous Yiwu, now the symbol of Chinese economy, was even a remote land famous for its poverty and backwardness in the middle of Zhejiang 30 years ago. In 1982, Yiwu was a small town with an area of only 2.8 km². The arable land per capita was less than 0.5 acres in Yiwu; soil was poor; food and clothing problem of people had not yet been resolved. The urbanization rate of Yiwu was less than 10 % then. However, in less than 30 years, Yiwu underwent earth-shaking changes. Yiwu has developed into “the world’s largest small commodity wholesale market” from a backward little town; the market was recognized by UN, World Bank and Morgan Stanley and other authorities. Now Yiwu market business area is 4.7 million square meters; there are 1.7 million kinds of commodities; the total market trade increased by 1,100 times in 24 years. In 2012, the total output value was 80.3 billion Yuan in Yiwu; the total income of public finance was 10.15 billion Yuan; total volume of import and export was 9.35 billion U.S. dollars; the urban average disposable income per capita reached 44,509 Yuan; net income per capita was 19,147 Yuan in rural areas. At present, the urbanization rate has reached 65 % in Yiwu.

It is difficult to believe the miracle in Yiwu, but it truly happened; and it came from an adjustment policy 30 years ago. In September 1982, urged strongly by local poor people, Yiwu county government made the decision to open the town fair trade and made a famous decision later, the so-called “Four permissions” widely praised: namely, permitting farmers to engage in trade, to engage in long distance transportation for sale, to open urban and rural market and to compete through multiple channels.⁵ From the current point of view, this decision might even be somewhat puzzled. It created the world’s largest commercial development miracle. The “Four permissions” can be described as the Chinese Charter Oath. The Charter Oath in Meiji Restoration awoke the spirit of Japanese people. The boundless enthusiasm and creativity of the people gushed out due to “Four Permissions” in Yiwu; and a miracle was created.

⁵ Exploration of Cultural Source of Development in Yiwu, Social Sciences Academic Press, 2007, pp. 5–10.



The First Generation of Yiwu Small Commodity Market in the 1980s



The Fifth Generation of Yiwu Small Commodity Market after 20 Years

The changes in Yiwu and the overall social progress since the reform and opening up of China confirmed the truth of a simple industrial age-economic development can obtain infinite power from safeguarding people's rights.

4.2.3 Centralization of Power: Achieve Strategic Development

Whether the developing countries have the advantage of late-development, it depends on the appropriate political conditions. It is not a purely economic problem. In the political conditions, the role of government is the most important, namely whether the government can play the role of planning, organization and provide public services to promote intensive economic development and improve the efficiency of economic development. And whether the government of a country has such a role further depends on the political system of the country, and relies on whether the Government has the ability to concentrate and deploy resources under a political system, namely Deng Xiaoping said: the ability to “Centralize power to do great things”.

The Chinese political system gives the government the ability of centralizing resources, promoting development, playing the role of organization and coordinating in economic society. It is just another aspect of the Chinese political system playing a role in promoting development and progress of the economic society. While protecting the rights of the people and mobilizing the enthusiasm of the people, the government concentrates their wisdom and resources for the strategic development of the national economy. The so-called strategic development is the intensive high-efficiency process of industrialization under the planning, organization and promotion of government. Centralization of power does not mean that the government does everything. Before the reform and opening up in a highly centralized planned economy, the government was versatile. Its power covered all aspects of economy and society. Such highly centralized power and command-style economic management model was precisely the original object of economic system reform.

The economic reform ended the highly centralized planned economy. After that, the economy management mode of the government also changed. The government's macroeconomic management functions became a major problem at the early stage of the reform and opening up. Since 1982, China has made six times of reform of government institutions at three stages to explore what the government should decentralize, what should manage and how historical change of economic functions of the government gradually realize.

After continuous exploration and reform, the understanding of the economic functions of government becomes clear gradually. The Chinese government's economic functions are mainly determined in several aspects: economic macro-control, development of strategic planning, coordination of regional development, infrastructure construction and provision of public services.

(a) Regulation of Market Economy

Macro-control is that the government regulates and controls the market economy by means of economic policies, economic regulations, economic and social development planning and the necessary administrative management. The goal of macro-control is to promote economic growth, increase employment, stabilize price and maintain the international balance of payment. Among various economic functions of the government, macro-control is the most important and basic function.

British economist John Maynard Keynes created the concept of macro-control. China gives the macro-control a new meaning in the socialist market economic practice.

The formation of Chinese macro-control concept underwent a process, namely macro regulation-macro control-macro regulation and control. Since Chinese reform and opening up, the first large-scale macro-control practice appeared in the 1990s. In 1992, the important speech delivered by Deng Xiaoping when he visited the south and the spirit of the 14th Communist Party of China greatly encouraged the enthusiasm of various regions, departments, ordinary cadres and the people. An unprecedented booming trend appeared in China, which promoted the rapid growth of the national economy effectively. On the other hand, because of the friction between the new system and the old one, especially the old regulatory system failed gradually, the new macro-control mechanism had not been perfect yet; while the economy developed, the phenomenon of “overheating” appeared. Both investment and consumption were expanded excessively; it was out of control to raise funds in society and establish financial organizations. The cost of living of urban residents reached double-digits in 35 cities.

In June 1993, the CPC Central Committee proposed 16 measures for strengthening macro-control, including the implementation of moderately tight fiscal policy and monetary policy, rectification of the financial order and circulation, control of the scale of investment and strengthening of price supervision. In the second half of 1996, the macro-control achieved significant results; financial order was improved quickly; price increase slowed significantly; inflation was suppressed, in moderately tight economic macro-policy environment, the economy still maintained a high speed; “soft landing” of economy was achieved.

After the Asian financial crisis broke out in 1997, the Chinese government withstood pressure and promised that RMB would not be devalued; macroeconomic policy was adjusted accordingly; the policy of expanding domestic demand and stimulating economic growth was adopted. A series of measures have been taken since 1998: issue bonds on a large scale continuously; increase government investment; increase the construction of infrastructure; stimulate the overall needs of the society; expand university enrollment; develop holiday economy and stimulate consumer demand. In cooperation with various macro-control policies, the growth rate of Chinese economy recovered steadily and showed strong momentum.

After the international financial crisis broke out in 2008, the global economic growth slowed significantly; external demand was reduced greatly; Chinese traditional competitive advantages were gradually weakened-Chinese economy faced a severe test. On the basis of analysis of the economic situation at home and abroad,

Chinese government adjusted the macroeconomic policy; it shifted the focus of macro-control to preventing rapid decline in the growth rate. It implemented the proactive fiscal policy and moderately loose monetary policy. Strive to expand domestic demand, especially the consumer demand, maintain stability of economy, finance, capital market and society. Ten measures were described as “4 trillion yuan economic stimulus plan of China” by the international society; they were deployed by the State Council executive meeting and were taken for further expanding domestic demand and promoting economic growth in early November 2008. Ten measures included the acceleration of construction of affordable housing projects, rural infrastructure, railways, highways, airports and other major infrastructure; acceleration of development of health care, culture and education; acceleration of construction of the ecological environment, independent innovation and adjustment of structure, reconstruction after the Wenchuan earthquake; increasing the income of urban and rural residents, full implementation of the VAT reform (Value-Added Tax), encouraging technological transformation of enterprises, reducing the burden for enterprises, increasing financial support for economic growth and so on.⁶

(b) Formulation of Strategic Plan for Economic Development

The most important strategic plan for economic development of China is the long-term planning, namely the “Five-Year Plan”. Since the development of the “First Five-Year Plan” in 1953, 25-year plans have been implemented. Since the sixth “Five-Year Plan” was implemented in 1981, besides the national economic development plan, the content of social development was added to the five-year plan, which became the “National Economic and Social Development Plan.” In the socialist market economic system, the economic and social development plan is one of the important means of macroeconomic control.

Before reform and opening up, a highly centralized planned economy had been implemented since the early days of the founding of China. The mandatory plans were used for the entire administration of social production, resource allocation and product consumption. This system played an important role in mobilizing resources of human, material and finance of the country effectively and establishing a relatively independent industrial system and national economic system in a short period. But the disadvantages were also obvious. In the planned economic system, enterprises became the subsidiaries of the administration departments; they neither operate independently nor are responsible for their own profit and loss. More interventions in the micro-economic activities separated production from demand; lack of incentives for enterprises and workers resulted in low efficiency; separation of plan from reality might cause huge waste.

The reform of the planning system was the earliest entry point of economic system reform. In December 1979, Deng Xiaoping pointed out: “We are mainly planned economy, combined with market economy, but it is a socialist market econ-

⁶Deployment of Measures to Expand Domestic Demand and Promote Economic Growth at the State Council Executive Meeting, the central government portal. http://www.gov.cn/jdhd/2008-11/09/content_1143689.htm

omy” (Deng Xiaoping 1994b, p. 236). The State Council asked the State Planning Commission to develop the reform program of planning system and required that “Manage and control major aspects; liberalize and deregulate small aspects” and “Streamline administration and delegate power to the lower levels”. In October 1984, the State Council approved and forwarded Several Provisional Regulations on Improving the Planning System of the National Development Planning Commission and put forward that the national economic and social development used the five-year plan as the main form gradually, simplifying the annual plan, developing long-term planning and preparing the industry planning, regional planning, land planning and a number of special programs. In 1987, the 13th CPC National Congress proposed “The Inherent Unified System of Plan and Market”. The role of plan and market covered the whole society. The system of “State Regulates the Market and the Market Guides Enterprises” should be established. To make it clear that the focus of support and restriction in the national economy is an important basis for adjusting industrial structure and conducting macro-control. In October 1992, the 14th CPC National Congress put forward that “the national plan is an important means of macroeconomic control”. The focus of updating the plan concepts and improving the plan methods is to determine the strategic objectives of national economy and social development reasonably; implement the economic development forecast, control of the total amount and layout planning of important structure and productivity; centralize necessary resources of finance and material to focus on construction; use economic levers comprehensively to promote economy to develop faster and better (Jiang Zemin 1996, p. 20).

After the reform, the status, role and function of Chinese national economic and social development plan have been clear. The national plan is an important means for the government to strengthen macro-control. The important strategy, basic task and industrial policy put forward by the national plan have the macroscopic, strategic, policy and guiding characteristics. The plan has functions of guidance, coordination and regulation for the important areas and major economic activities of the overall national economy; it has an extremely important information guiding role in economic activities of the whole society; it has a guiding role in the economic activities of the whole society; and it also has the guiding and promoting role in rational allocation of social resources.

(c) Coordination of Regional Development

The distribution of population resources is uneven in China. Aihui-Tengchong line is not only the population distribution line but also a natural geographical boundary, climate boundary and resource distribution line. In China, the coordination problem of development among regions and departments must be solved for the realization of industrialization and modernization.

In 1957, Mao Zedong put forward in his speech for Party Secretaries from the provinces, cities and autonomous regions: “Overall consideration and each in his proper place are always our policy” (Mao Zedong 1999b, p. 186). In the same year, he pointed out in his report On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People: “Our policy is overall consideration and appropriate arrangements” (Mao

Zedong 1999c, p. 228). Deng Xiaoping once pointed out: “We must adjust the relationship among various interests in accordance with the principle of overall consideration” (Deng Xiaoping 1994c, p. 250). “The task of modernization has several aspects. Comprehensive balance is needed among all aspects. It must not concentrate on one thing” (Deng Xiaoping 1994d, p. 175). Jiang Zemin further pointed out: “Reform and opening up is a magnificent and complex system engineering. All aspects must coordinate with each other and complement each other; caring for this and losing that or placing either too little emphasis or too much emphasis on a matter will not succeed finally. We must consider the work comprehensively” (Jiang Zemin 2006c, p. 307).

Since the 16th Congress of the Communist Party of China, the understanding of overall consideration was deepened. The scientific concept of development was put forward in the Decision of the CCP Central Committee on Several Issues in Perfecting the Socialist Market Economy adopted by the Third Plenary Sessions of its Sixteenth Central Committee in 2003: “Put people first; establish a comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development concept; promote comprehensive development of the economy, society and the people”, and proposed new requirements for “Overall consideration for development in urban and rural areas, that of region, economy, society, harmony between human and nature, as well as the domestic development and opening-up” (Referred to as the “Five considerations”). The scientific concept of development was determined as a governing philosophy of Communist Party of China.

After the 16th National Congress, in the aspect of coordinated regional development, our country has put forward the strategies of western development, revitalizing the old northeast industrial bases, rising in Central China and so on.

In November 2002, the 16th National Congress determined to implement the policy of “Actively advance the large-scale development on the western region to promote the coordinated development of regional economy”. The scope of western development strategy included Chongqing, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Tibet, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 12 provinces, autonomous regions or municipalities in total. In 2006, the State Council approved the implementation of the Eleventh Five Year Plan for the Development of the Western Regions. The plan had been completed successfully. The comprehensive economic strength increased substantially in the western region. From 2000 to 2008, the total output value in the western region increased from 1.6655 trillion Yuan to 5.8257 trillion Yuan, an average annual increase of 11.7 %. The proportion of total regional output value in the country increased from 17.5 % in 1999 to 18.6 % in 2010. The total regional output value per capita equivalent to the national average value increased from 58 % to 68 %. The average annual growth rate of major economic indicators was higher than the national average value. From 2000 to 2008, the industrial added value increased from 594.6 billion Yuan to 2.4 trillion Yuan. Total fixed asset investment increased from 611.1 billion Yuan to 3.5839 trillion Yuan, an average annual increase of 22.9 %. The total retail sales of social consumer goods increased from 595.4 billion

Yuan to 1.9239 trillion Yuan, an average annual increase of 14.9 %. The total volume of import and export trade increased from \$17.2 billion to \$106.8 billion, an average annual increase of 25.6 %. People's living standards were improved significantly. Compared with those in 2005, urban and rural income increased by 80.0 % and 85.7 % respectively in 2010. Historical changes took place in urban and rural areas. From 2000 to 2012, 187 new major projects were started in the western development; total investment was 3.68 trillion Yuan. The construction of infrastructure and ecological environment made a breakthrough; industries with characteristics and advantages flourished in the western region.

In 1990s, a large number of state-owned enterprises at the old industrial bases in the northeast region of China faced restructuring. The friction between the old and new system; problems left over from the history; a large number of state-owned enterprises had stopped production and semi-production; scope and amount of loss remained high; many workers lost their jobs, so that the old Northeast industrial bases faced many difficulties, which was known as the "Northeast Phenomenon". In October 2003, *Opinions on Implementing the Strategy of Revitalizing the Old Industrial Bases Including Northeast China* of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council started the revitalization strategy for the old industrial bases in the northeast region of China. Subsequently, the provincial and municipal revitalization plans were issued one after another in the northeast region of China.

Since the implementation of revitalization strategy at the old industrial bases in the northeast region of China, the important initial results of development had been achieved in the northeastern region. In 2010, 3.709 trillion Yuan of total regional output value was achieved in the Northeast, increased by 13.6 % over the same period of the previous year. In 2011, the total economic output of three northeastern provinces reached 4.5 trillion Yuan. In 2012, GDP of three northeastern provinces reached 5.04 trillion Yuan. This economic growth rate was higher than the national average. In three Northeast provinces, the investment environment was improved; the attractiveness of investment was enhanced; the growth of fixed asset investment was much higher than the national growth rate. From 2004 to 2008, the total annual fixed asset investment remained above 30 % in three provinces in the Northeast. In 2011, the fixed assets investment was 3.27 trillion Yuan, an increase of 30.4 %. In 2012, the investment was 4.1243 trillion Yuan, an increase of 26.3 %. The grain production increased from 1,446 billion Jin⁷ in 2004 to 2,360 billion Jin in 2012 in the Northeast, which made an important contribution to the realization of "Growth for nine consecutive years" of national grain; from 2003 to 2007, the fiscal revenue of three provinces in the northeast region of China increased steadily, but the growth rate was still lower than the national level. From 2008 to 2012, the growth rate of fiscal revenue in three northeastern provinces exceeded the national average, a few percentage points higher than that.

The scope of the rise strategy of Central China included six provinces: Shanxi, Anhui, Henan, Hubei, Hunan and Jiangxi. After the reform and opening up, the economy developed rapidly in the southeast coastal areas. The level of economic

⁷ 1 Jin=500 g.

development in the central region was much lower than that in the eastern region. After the implementation of the western development strategy, the economic development momentum in the western region was very strong; the development speed in central region was slower than that in the western region. The level of development in the central eastern is lower than that in the east; the development speed in the central region is slower than that in the western region. It is described as the phenomenon of “Central collapse”. In order to accelerate the development in the central region, in April 2006, the *Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on the Promotion of the Rise of the Central Region* was issued officially. In March 2004, Premier Wen Jiabao put forward the problem of promoting the rise in the central region in his government work report for the first time. On March 27, 2006, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee held a meeting to study the work in the central region. In September 2009, the State Council adopted the “*Plan for Promoting the Rise of the Central Region*” in principle. On September 6, 2010, *Guiding Opinions of the State Council on Central and Western Regions’ Undertaking of Industrial Transfer* was issued officially.

Since the implementation of the rise strategy of Central China, various businesses developed rapidly in the region. From 2005 to 2010, the average annual growth rate of GDP in Central China reached 15.3 %, 5 percentage points higher than the national average; the annual growth rate of GDP per capita was more than 13.5 %, 1.1 percentage points higher than the national average over the same period; the proportional share of the country’s total economic output also increased from 18.8 % in 2005 to 19.7 % in 2010. Grain yield increased for seven consecutive years; the proportional share of the country’s output was above 30 % steadily; the average annual growth rate of total volume of import and export commodities was 31.5 %; the average annual growth rate of foreign trade in provinces was much higher than the growth rate of total output value over the same period. In 2010, the growth rate of fixed asset investment in the central region was higher than that in the east and west; the growth rate of retail sales of social consumer goods ranked first in the country. Six provinces in the central region entered the “Trillion Club” in 2011. In 2012, the average growth rate of GDP of six provinces in the central region was 10.9 %, 3 percentage points higher than the national average growth rate; their proportional share of the country’s total economic output increased from 8.8 % in 2005 to 20.2 % in 2012.

(d) Promote the Construction of Infrastructure

Before the reform and opening up, the investment system adapted to the highly centralized planned economy system. Main investors were the government. The investment decision was mainly made by the government. The source of investment funds was the single financial capital. Investment management adopted direct allocation of materials and gratuitous distribution system.

After the reform and opening up, Chinese investment system underwent tremendous changes. *The Decision on Several Issues in the Establishment of a Socialist Market Economic System* adopted by the Third Plenary Session of the 14th CPC in 1993 put forward that the investment project was divided into three categories:

public welfare, infrastructure and competition; public welfare projects were invested and constructed by the government; infrastructure projects were invested mainly by the government and attracted enterprises and foreign investors to invest; competitive projects were invested by enterprises. According to the unified plan, financing of the important national construction projects were carried out through financial investment, financing, financial bonds and other channels by national development bank and other policy banks; holding, equity participation and policy preferential loans and other forms were adopted; the legal person of the enterprise was responsible for whole process of planning, financing, construction, production, operation, repaying of the principal and interest of the loan as well as the preservation and appreciation of assets. The construction of social welfare projects should absorb funds of the society extensively; they should be arranged comprehensively through the finance by the government according to the division of powers of central and local governments.

In 2004, the *Decision of the State Council on Reform of the Investment System* provided that the government investment was mainly used in economic and social fields related to national security that the market could not effectively configure resources, including strengthening the construction of public welfare and public infrastructure; protecting and improving the ecological environment; promoting economic and social development in underdeveloped areas and promoting technological progress and high-tech industrialization. If the projects could be invested by the society, the social investment should be used as much as possible. The investment powers of the central government and local government should be arranged reasonably. Besides the investment for the construction of regime of its level, the investment of the central government was mainly arranged for transregional and inter-basin projects and those having significant impact on the overall economic and social development.

From 1954 to 2008, the investment for agricultural infrastructure, commodity grain and cotton production bases and protection forest construction totaled 2.0531 trillion Yuan, an average annual growth of 10.6 %. During the period of the “Eleventh Five-Year” plan, the level of agricultural technologies and equipments was improved steadily; the effective irrigation area was 9.05 million hectares in the country; water-saving irrigation area was 4.1 million acres; the agricultural mechanization level of farming and harvesting of main crops and the scientific and technological progress contribution rate reached 52 % respectively. The problem of safe drinking water of 210 million rural people was solved in 5 years. Most electricity in rural areas realized urban–rural integration management and service basically; the newly built and rebuilt rural roads were more than 1.86 million km; rural biogas users reached 40 million; rural housing projects were constructed smoothly. An area of 25.27 million hectares of afforestation was completed in 5 years; the forest coverage rate reached 20.36 %; the newly added soil erosion control area was 230,000 km²; the newly added desertification control area was 10.81 million hectares; the newly added area of control of “degradation, desertification and alkalization” of grassland was 80.17 million hectares; the area of returning grazing land to grassland was 32.4 million hectares.

The South-to-North Water Diversion Project was almost completed. The overall layout of the Project was put forward in the Report on the *Planning Highlights for Use of Yangtze River Basin* in 1959; the layout was the program of water diversion from the upstream, midstream and downstream of Yangtze River. After decades of hard work, on the basis of planning, design and demonstration, the overall planning of the South-to-North Water Diversion Project was formed; the eastern, central and western water diversion routes were determined; the total size of planned diversion was 44.8 billion cubic meters. After completion, the project, the Yangtze River, Yellow River and Huaihe River will constitute the overall layout of “Four vertical routes and three horizontal routes”; the goal of North-south deployment and East-west mutual aid of national water resources will be achieved. In 2002, the South-to-North Water Diversion Project officially started. According to the construction plan of the South-to-North Water Diversion Project, its first phase of the eastern route was completed in 2013. The main part of the project of the central route in the first phase was completed in 2013. It will be put into use after flood season in 2014.

The railway mileage increased from 21,800 km in 1949 to 98,000 km until the end of 2012, ranking second in the world. High-speed railway mileage was 9,356 km, ranking first in the world. Until the end of June 2013, the high-speed railway mileage in construction was about 12,060 km. The road mileage increased from 80,000 km in 1949 to 4,237,500 km in 2012, of which the highway mileage increased from 100 km in 1988 to 96,200 km. The trunk line of the state road of “Five vertical lines and seven horizontal lines” was formed preliminarily; the road grade was significantly improved; road conditions were improved obviously; such situation led to the development of automobile industry.

Construction of civil aviation developed greatly. Until the end of 2012, there were 183 civilian transport airports in China. The existing airports cover 77.7 % of cities in mainland China and 76 % of minority autonomous prefectures, leagues and regional capitals. During the period of the “Twelfth Five-Year Plan”, 82 airports will be built; 26 airports will be relocated and built; 109 airports will be rebuilt and expanded; preliminary studies on the construction of 36 airports will be carried out in China.

The number of fixed telephone users increased from 220,000 in 1949 to 274 million in 2013 (once reached 340 million in 2008). Mobile phones appeared. According to statistics released by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of PRC, until March 2013, there were 1.146 billion mobile users in China, of which 2.7727 million were 3G users, accounting for 24.20 % of all users; 8.1739 million users accessed mobile Internet, accounting for 71.34 % of all users.

(e) Providing Basic Public Services

Under the conditions of the socialist market economy, the government functions determined in the Sixteenth National Congress report were “Economic Regulation, Market Supervision, Social Management and Public Service”. It was put forward in *The Outline of the 12th Five-year Plan of the People’s Republic of China for National Economic and Social Development* in 2010 that for the protection and improvement of people’s livelihood, more complete sustainable basic public service

systems, which could meet the national conditions and cover urban and rural areas, must be gradually improved; the government's protection capabilities must be improved and the equalization of basic public services should be promoted. Opinions On Deepening The Reform of Administrative System determined at the second plenary session of the Seventeenth Central Committee in 2008 proposed that we should strengthen market supervision strictly; promote equitable access; standardize the law enforcement of market; strengthen the supervision of the security field involved in people's lives and property; strengthen social management; strengthen the functions of government to promote employment and regulate income distribution; improve the social security system; improve the grassroots social management system and maintain social stability; pay more attention to public services; make the effort to promote the healthy development of education, health, culture and others; establish and improve the fair, equitable, moderate, sustainable developing public service system for benefiting all the people and promote the equalization of basic public services.

Since the founding of China, especially the reform and opening up, the quantity and quality of public services provided by the Chinese government have been improved greatly.

When the new China was founded, more than 80 % of Chinese population was illiterate. The primary school enrollment rate of school-age children was less than 20 %. The junior middle school enrollment rate was 6 %. In the early years of the reform and opening up, in 1978, the primary school gross enrollment rate was 94 %; junior middle school enrollment rate was 20 % and high school gross enrollment rate was less than 10 %. The Compulsory Education Law was promulgated by the National People's Congress in 1986. The 9-year compulsory education was popularized by 2000. The net primary school enrollment rate of school-age children reached 99.85 % in 2012. Of which, the net enrollment rate of boys and girls was 99.84 % and 99.86 %, respectively. The enrollment rate of junior middle school graduates reached 88.4 %. Gross enrollment rate of high school was 85.0 %. In 2002, the gross enrollment rate of higher education reached 15 % and reached 30 % in 2012.

In the early days of the founding of China, poverty and blankness could be used to describe Chinese health service. After the reform and opening up, the public health care developed rapidly. In 2012, there were 1.94 practicing (assistant) physicians and 1.85 registered nurses per 1,000 people and 4.24 beds per 1,000 people in medical and health institutions. 98.3 % of farmers participated in the new rural cooperative medical work and had medical insurance. Chinese average life expectancy has reached 76 years.

Chinese economy develops more rapidly later. One of the reasons for Chinese development was summarized as the "advantages of late-development" by experts in the field of international economy. But from the perspective of the overall situation of the world economy, there are a few countries achieving the advantages of so-called late-development really. In Asia, only South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan experienced sustainable and rapid economic development after World War II; to a certain extent, they were in line with the concept of late-development advantage.

But more countries in Asia, such as the Philippines, India, etc., they had relatively good initial conditions in the early years after the war, but they were in the long-term slow development period later. The income per capita in the Philippines with good natural resource endowments ranked second in Asia in 1960, behind Japan. But it declined later and now it lagged far behind in East Asia. Among large countries in Asia and the world, China is one of the few developing countries achieving late-development advantage really.

References

- Deng Xiaoping. (1993a). Eliminate interference and move on. In *Selected works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 3). Beijing: People's Publishing House.
- Deng Xiaoping. (1993b). The reform of the system of party and state leadership. In *Selected works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 2). Beijing: People's Publishing House.
- Deng Xiaoping. (1994a). Emancipating our mind, seeking truth from facts and uniting as one in looking forward to the future. In *Selected works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 2, 2nd ed.). Beijing: People's Publishing House.
- Deng Xiaoping. (1994b). Socialism can also engage in the market economy. In *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 2). Beijing: People's Publishing House.
- Deng Xiaoping. (1994c). Four basic principles. In *Selected works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 2). Beijing: People's Publishing House.
- Deng Xiaoping. (1994d). The current situation and tasks. In *Selected works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 2). Beijing: People's Publishing House.
- Jiang Zemin. (1996). Accelerate the pace of reform and opening up and modernization construction, achieve greater victories in the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. In *The important documents selected since the fourteenth national congress of the communist party of China*, People's Publishing House.
- Jiang Zemin. (2002). Speech at the conference for the study of Deng Xiaoping theory. Jiang Zemin on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics (thematic excerpts), Central Party Literature Press.
- Jiang Zemin. (2006a). Hold high the great banner of Deng Xiaoping theory, advance the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics into the 21st century. In *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin* (Vol. 2, 1st ed.). Beijing: People's Publishing House.
- Jiang Zemin. (2006b). Building a moderately prosperous society, creating a new situation in the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. In *Selected works of Jiang Zemin* (Vol. 3, 1st ed.). Beijing: People's Publishing House.
- Jiang Zemin. (2006c). On strengthening and improving learning. In *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin* (Vol. 2). Beijing: People's Publishing House.
- Mao Zedong. (1986). On the ten major relationships. In *Selected Readings of Mao Zedong* (Vol. 2). Beijing: People's Publishing House.
- Mao Zedong. (1999a). Conversation with personnel in charge of the work in Suiyuan. In *Collected works of Mao Zedong* (Vol. 6). Beijing: People's Publishing House.
- Mao Zedong. (1999b). On the correct handling of contradictions among the people. In *Collected Works of Mao Zedong* (Vol. 7). Beijing: People's Press.
- Mao Zedong. (1999c). Speech at the conference of party secretaries from province and autonomous region. In *Collected Works of Mao Zedong* (Vol. 7). Beijing: People's Press.
- Schramm, S. R. (2005). *Mao Zedong thought*. Beijing: China Renmin University Press Co., Ltd.

Chapter 5

Key Priorities for Democracy Building in China: The Development of Consultative Democracy

The 18th CPC National Congress officially confirmed the concept of “consultative democracy” in the form of the report of the CPC Congress and identified it as the direction and key task of development of socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics at the current stage. Dividing democratic politics formalistically into consultative democracy and electoral democracy is a sinicized classification method for democratic politics and reflects a concept of democracy with Chinese characteristics. Distinguishing consultative democracy and electoral democracy, proposing the concept of consultative democracy and identifying consultative democracy as the direction and key task of development of socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics at the current stage is an important feature of Chinese-style democracy and the important experience acquired in the long-term exploration on building of democratic politics.

5.1 The Origin and Development of Consultative Democracy in China

According to the public publications available, the earliest discourse about the two forms of consultative and electoral democracy was made by Jiang Zemin in March 1991. Jiang Zemin stated that “China’s socialist democracy is realized through two forms: one is that the people exercise their rights by participating in elections and casting their votes; and the other is that the people engage in extensive consultations before major decisions are made in order to reach consensus on general issues. This is unparalleled by the Western democracy. Two forms are better than one form and can better reflect the true rights of the people as masters of the socialist society.”¹

¹ Refer to Jiang Zemin’s *Theory on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics (Extracts)*, the People’s Publishing House, 2002 edition, p. 347.

In the official documents of the Party and the government, consultative democracy was first proposed in the Opinions of the CPC Central Committee on Strengthening the Work of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in 2006, which states that: "In the populous socialist country with such a vast landmass, the people engage in extensive consultations on the major issues bearing on people's livelihood under the leadership of the CPC, reflecting the unity of democracy and centralism. China's socialist democracy is realized through two forms: one is that the people exercise their rights by participating in elections and casting their votes; and the other is that the people engage in extensive consultations before major decisions are made in order to reach consensus on general issues",² thus, "electoral democracy" and "consultative democracy" were first proposed as two forms of socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics.

On November 15, 2007, the Information Office of the State Council published the White Paper on *China's Political Party System*, which confirmed for the first time the concept of electoral democracy and consultative democracy. China's Political Party System states that: "One major feature of China's socialist democracy is the combination of democratic election and democratic consultation. In China, the people's congress system and the multi-party cooperation system under the leadership of the CPC supplement each other."³

In 2009, in his speech marking the 60th anniversary of the CPPCC, Hu Jintao, General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, reiterated the argument on two forms of democracy as stated in the Opinions of the CPC *Central Committee on Strengthening the Work of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)* in 2006 and emphasized that adherence to improving consensus and gathering strength through extensive consultations has profound significance in the organic unity of adherence to leadership by the Party, ensuring that the people are masters of the country and governing the country according to law, in the development of China's socialist democratic politics and in the full mobilization of the enthusiasm and initiative of all walks of life to uphold and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics.

In general, the development of consultative democracy in China has experienced a long process from gradual exploration and summary to establishment of theoretical concept and system.

²The Office of the CPPCC National Committee and CCCPC Party Literature Research Office: Selection of Important Documents of the CPPCC (Vol. 2), the Central Literary Contributions Press, 2009 edition, p. 762.

³The Office of the CPPCC National Committee and CCCPC Party Literature Research Office: Selection of Important Documents of the CPPCC (Vol. 2), the Central Literary Contributions Press, 2009 edition, p. 763.

5.1.1 *“Three-Thirds System” and “Old CPPCC”*

Before the founding of New China, during the period of the Anti-Japanese War, to establish and consolidate the Anti-Japanese National United Front, Mao Zedong proposed in 1940 the “Three-thirds System” as the organizational principle of regime. Refer to the relevant contents in Chap. 3. The purpose of implementing the “Three-thirds System” is to win the support of the neutral forces. The so-called Three-thirds System is to attract the representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, the middle class and the enlightened gentries to the CPC-led anti-Japanese democratic regime. Zhou Enlai had made a summary about this: “A big party should not ride over the opponent by an overwhelming majority, but should tolerate the opponent and win a victory by its own stands. All parties should carry out consultations to achieve a common program as the policy guideline” (Zhou Enlai 1981, p. 253).

After the victory of the Anti-Japanese War, the KMT (Kuomintang) and the CPC signed the “Double Ten Agreement”, which agreed to convene the multi-party political consultative conference in January 1946. To distinguish it from the Chinese People’s Consultative Conference held in 1949, it was called the “Old Political Consultative Conference”. The Political Consultative Conference held 1946 carried out heated debates on the issues such as reorganization of the government, the policy agenda, the military reformation, the National Assembly and the draft of constitution and eventually formed five resolutions including the Protocol on Military Issues. It was agreed at the conference that “the KMT government should be reorganized and a half of the members should be persons other than the KMT members” (Hu Sheng 1991, p. 238). However, this Protocol was destroyed in November, and the short-lived “Old Political Consultative Conference” declared bankruptcy. Nevertheless, the “Three-thirds System” and “Old Political Consultative Conference” were the initial exploration and trial of the Chinese people on the practice of consultative democracy in the period of New Democracy. These trials have some of the characteristics of consultative democracy, providing reference for the establishment of the political consultative conference after the founding of New China.

5.1.2 *The New CPPCC Started the Practice of Consultative Democracy*

The CPPCC held in 1949 started the practice of consultative democracy in New China. Chairman Mao Zedong once said: New China was founded through consultations. On April 30, 1948, the Communist Party of China mobilized people in all strata to achieve the glorious mission of founding of New China and issued the Slogan for Commemorating the Labor Day on May 1st, which called on “all democratic parties, all people’s organizations and social elites to quickly convene the political consultative conference to discuss and convene the People’s Congress and

set up a democratic coalition government”.⁴ On the eve of the founding of New China, the CPC members once again raised the banner of political consultations. The release of the “May 1st Slogan” got an enthusiastic response from all the democratic parties and numerous democratic personages without party affiliation, and the main leaders of the democratic parties and social celebrities sent a telegraph in a joint name to the CPC central committee and declared to the people throughout the country to support the convening of the “New Political Consultative Conference” and the establishment of the democratic coalition government in which all democratic parties participated.



The “May 1st Slogan” was published in the People’s Daily on May 2, 1948

On September 21–30, 1949, the CPPCC held its first plenary session. This is the conference for the founding of New China. On the basis of extensive consultations, 46 units and 662 representatives participating in the conference adopted the three historic documents for the foundation of New China, i.e. The Common Program of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, The Organization Law for Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and The Organization Law for the Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China. The Common Program of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference became an interim constitution of New China and the Chinese-style “Great Charter” that should be abided by the Chinese people. The Organization Law for Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference determined that the CPPCC should always take political consultations as its own task and confirmed it organizationally and institutionally, marking the establishment of the CPPCC as an institutional design and the change of political consultations from an ideological concept and an institutional design to a political consultation system and practice.

⁴Selected Documents of the Central Committee of Communist Party of China (14), the Central Party School Publishing House, 1987 edition, p. 111.

5.1.3 New Development and Institutionalization of Consultative Democracy in the New Era

Since 1957, due to the misjudgment of international and domestic situations and the deviation in ideological theory, the CPC leaders headed by Mao Zedong launched a series of wrong political campaigns including the “Anti-rightist”, the “Four Cleanups” and the “Cultural Revolution”, deviating the country from the right track and seriously interfering with and hindering the normal development of China’s democratic politics. The people’s political consultative system as the main carrier of consultative democracy was also seriously damaged, the building of consultative democracy was at a standstill, and even the political consultative conference could not be convened regularly.

The 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee held in 1979 opened a new era of reform and opening up. In the new historical period, China witnessed consultative great development in democracy and eventually formed a consultative democracy system characterized by extensive political and social consultations.

Shortly after the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, Deng Xiaoping pointed out that: “The implementation of multi-party cooperation under the leadership of the CPC is decided by the specific historical conditions and the actual conditions of China, and it is also one of the characteristics and advantages of China’s political system” (Deng Xiaoping 1994, p. 205). In September 1982, the 12th CPC National Congress developed the eight-character guiding principle of “Long-Term Coexistence, Mutual Supervision” into the sixteen-character guiding principle of “Long-Term Coexistence, Mutual Supervision, Sincere Treatment with Each Other and the Sharing of Weal or Woe”.⁵ The 16-character guiding principle showing the relationship between the Communist Party of China and all democratic parties was officially established and became the basic principle for multi-party cooperation under the leadership of the CPC in the new era. In October 1987, the 13th CPC National Congress combined the multi-party cooperation system and the political consultation system under the leadership of the CPC into what was called the “multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the CPC. The Opinions on Upholding and Improving the System of Multi-Party Cooperation and Political Consultation under the Leadership of the CPC promulgated at the end of 1989 determined the system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC as the basic political system. At the National People’s Congress early in 1993, the content of “we should guarantee the long-term existence and development of the system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC” was written in the constitution, thus putting the system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC under protection of the country’s fundamental law.

⁵ Refer to “The Opinions on Upholding and Improving the System of Multi-Party Cooperation and Political Consultation under the Leadership of the CPC”, promulgated by the CPC Central Committee in 1989.

After entering the new century, with rapid development of industrialization and urbanization in China, the new social conditions, new social conflicts and social problems have appeared one after another, and this has inspired and promoted the development and progress of consultative democracy in China from another aspect. Since the 16th CPC National Congress, consultative democracy has further stepped into the stages of institutionalization and standardization. Since the 16th CPC National Congress, consultative democracy was first reflected at the level of the multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the CPC, embarked on the routinized and standardized track and formed the institutionalized operation procedures requiring political consultations to be conducted before and when decisions are made. In 2005, the CPC Central Committee issued the “Opinions on Further Strengthening the Development of the System of Multi-Party Cooperation and Political Consultation under the Leadership of the CPC”, which specifies the requirements for further improving the contents, forms and procedures of political consultations; stipulates that consultations should be carried out before decisions on major issues are made and during the course of their implementation, and political consultation should be included in the policy-making procedures; and specifies the two basic modes of political consultation: the CPC’s consultation with democratic parties, and the CPC’s consultation with democratic parties and representatives from all circles at the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and standardizes the contents and procedures for consultation between the CPC and the democratic parties and personages without party affiliation to further institutionalize political consultations.

In November 2013, the report of the 18th CPC National Congress gives a comprehensive and detailed description of consultative democracy and points out that consultative democracy is an extensive, multilevel institutional system and work mechanism. Extensive consultations should be carried out on major issues relating to economic and social development as well as specific problems involving the people’s immediate interests among organs of state power, committees of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, political parties, people’s organizations and other channels to solicit a wide range of opinions, pool wisdom of the people, increase consensus and build up synergy. We should make political consultation a part of the policymaking process and conduct consultations before and when policy decisions are made. In addition, we should make the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference a major channel for conducting consultative democracy and conduct intensive consultations on special issues with those who work on these issues, with representatives from all sectors of society and with relevant government authorities on the handling of proposals. These important expositions and arrangements mark the official establishment of the socialist consultative democracy theory and system, thus showing a new realm of the building and development of the Chinese democracy system.

5.2 Historical Value and Main Characteristics of Consultative Democracy in China

China is rising and growing into one of the world's major powers. China's political development plays an important role in the rise of China, and China's political development is also attracting worldwide attention. In China's industrialization and modernization process, the socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics also synchronously formed and developed. After 60 years of exploration and development since the founding of New China, especially after the 30 years since the reform and opening up, political consultation has become an important form and main characteristic of China's democratic politics.

5.2.1 *Historical Value of Contemporary Consultative Democracy in China*

The external environment and conditions have a leading effect on creation and development of consultative democracy in China, but more importantly, it has given full play to its own function and role in different historical periods, which is also the major cause for the sustainable development of consultative democracy in China. Consultative democracy is a major characteristics and advantage of socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics. Why should we widely promote consultative democracy? Fundamentally, the reason is that consultative democracy is a form of democracy most suitable for economic and social development in China at the current stage. Competitive institutional arrangement is not suitable for the current society in China, while democratic consultation helps to reconcile social conflicts and seek common grounds while putting aside differences and reach a consensus. Its intrinsic functions and value orientation can effectively solve social conflicts and promote social consensus and social harmony. Consultative democracy is selected as the main form of democratic political practice in China at the current stage, which is because it has great historical and contemporary value.

(a) Consultative Democracy Helps Integrate Social Relations and Reduce Social Conflicts and Expand Social Consensus

Competitive democracy is likely to cause interest expel because it enhances conflicts and results in the "winner-take-all" effect. Consultation is in essence to seek maximal common interests, take into account the interests of all parties and promote compromise. This is the most helpful approach to ease social conflicts and promote social integration in the period of industrial restructuring and frequent occurrence of social contradictions. The social consensus reached via democratic consultations promotes social integration. It is reflected at the current stage mainly on integration and

coordination of the three major relationships among the political parties, the emerging social groups and the ethnic groups. The carriers for social integration are mainly governmental organizations, political parties and non-government organizations.

In the integration of the three major relationships, the inter-party relationship is of most importance, the solidarity and cooperation relationship between the ruling party and the democratic parties and people's organizations is strengthened through the CPPCC and the political consultation system. The multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC established in China is in essence a cooperative consultative relationship. Under the leadership of the CPC, consultations are conducted by the democratic parties and personages without party affiliation on major issues, and the relationship between the personages without party affiliation and various democratic forces is adjusted, the interests of all parties are coordinated and the roles of various political forces are integrated in the consultation process to ultimately promote the formation of a consensus and the development of careers.

Since the reform and opening up, China has made historic progress in economic, cultural and social development. At the same time, the increasing differentiation of social groups has resulted in gradual diversification of interests and increase of social conflicts. With the formation of the socialist market economic system with public ownership as the mainstay and the private economy as an important supplement, numerous new social groups have emerged in China, mainly including the three groups of private entrepreneurs, white-collar workers and migrant workers. These emerging social groups mostly exist outside the system, mainly consisting of employees in non-public sectors, freelancers and migrant workers. As builders of the socialist causes with Chinese characteristics, they constitute the social basis of state power. Their benefit claims should arouse the concern of and be satisfied by the state power. Consultative democracy, as an intensive political participation and interest adjustment mechanism, provide an opportunity for different social groups to express their claims, safeguard their own interests and take on the responsibility for serving the society.

There are 56 ethnic groups in China and China is a unitary state. China has established the regional ethnic autonomy system within the unitary framework with a view to safeguarding the solidarity of all ethnic groups and social stability under the premise of national unity. The solidarity of all ethnic groups is an important factor that has a bearing on social harmony and stability. Consultative democracy helps promote understanding and coexistence among all ethnic groups. The CPPCC is the major political system in China at the current stage, and its ethnic and religious members have a close tie with the ethnic minority people and religious believers and have a certain influence, cohesion and appeal. A sound work system for ethnic minorities and religions with the characteristics of the CPPCC has been formed and become an important part of the party and the state's ethnic and religious work mechanism and plays a unique role in the party and the state's ethnic and religious work. Most ethnic minority people in China are religious believers, and the people of some ethnic groups are all religious believers. Therefore, we should face up to a wide range of social belief issues and properly handle the adaptability between religion and socialism. The form of consultative democracy can better safeguard the legitimate economic, political, cultural and religious rights and interests of ethnic

minority people and religious believers and helps establish the harmonious relationship among ethnic minority people and religious believers.

(b) Consultative Democracy Can Promote Democratic Oversight and Help Improve the Quality of Democracy

Consultative democracy and electoral democracy are not diametrically opposed and contradictory to the electoral and majoritarian democratic systems. In consultative democracy, people can fully air their views and various views can complement each other and converge through discussions and exchange to avoid one-sidedness; while consultative democracy also helps unify “subordinate to the majority” and “respect for the minority”. Consultative democracy has the characteristics of openness, equality and extensiveness and allows democratic oversight from various aspects to improve the quality of democracy and maximally integrate the interests of “the minority” and the “the majority”.

Openness and transparency in exercise of power is an effective way for democratic oversight. Consultative democracy has the characteristics of openness. Through deliberation of public policies, disclosure of all kinds of background materials for formulating public policies and equal consultation among relevant stakeholders, the openness and transparency of the decision-making process of the party and the government can be enhanced to meet people’s right to participate and right to be informed and help prevent the black operations. Due to its characteristics of extensive participation, in consultative democracy, the interests of individuals and collectives can be safeguarded through consultation and discussion by stakeholders, and more importantly, we can go beyond the interests of individuals and collectives and effectively safeguard the common interests of the society and give to play the role of political oversight. The principle of equality, responsibility and responsiveness in consultative democracy can effectively oversee public power, particularly the administrative discretion of the government, and has the effect that “all policy consultation participants have equal opportunities for identifying the problems, arguing the evidences and forming the agenda, the consultation process can accommodate a variety of interests, positions and values, and consultations can maximize social knowledge in the process of discussion and decision-making” (Chen Jiagang 2005, pp. 89–90, 97–100). The public consultation mechanism established based on consultative democracy helps coordinate the value preference of the three parties of the government, the society and the individuals so as to express and coordinate diverse interests and reach maximal common interests through free discussion, debate and consultation. This has become the most important goal and preferred value of the current development of China’s democratic politics and the contemporary value of consultative democracy.

(c) Consultative Democracy Helps Enhance the Scientific Level, Improve Efficiency and Reduce Costs of Policy-Making

The premise of competitive democracy, voting democracy and electoral democracy is open competition and debate. These forms of democracy have their own advantages, but their disadvantage is openness of differences and contradictions. Openness of differ-

ences and contradictions makes specific issues abstract and principle-oriented and results in opposition of values and moral judgment, increasing the costs to reach a compromise and consensus. Consultative democracy seeks common grounds while putting aside differences and generally avoids sharp contradictions and openness of differences, helping to reach a compromise and consensus and reduce the costs to reach a compromise. Just like what the Secretary of the Provincial Party Committee Wang Yang said at the CPPCC of Guangzhou in 2011: “The Chinese-style consultative democracy has ‘high efficiency, low cost and good effect’, and the opinions of the CPPCC should be taken into consideration at various stages when major decisions are made to ensure the scientificity of decision-making” (Wang Yang 2011).

Consultative democracy mainly has influence in three aspects in the whole decision-making process. First, it prevents hasty decision. The multi-party participation decision-making system can fully and effectively expose the problems in decision-making so that the party and government departments can give an overall consideration of the pros and cons and make a better choice. Second, it prevents delayed decision. Consultative democracy is a high-level platform for pooling the wisdom of people, and as the parties participating in consultations have relatively richer professional knowledge or practical experience, they can provide the viable theoretical basis for the party and government at all levels to make decisions and analyze and forecast the potential risks and future prospects. Third, it prevents inefficient enforcement of policies. “Consultative democracy runs through the whole process of policy enforcement and oversees the enforcement of policies to provide another layer of protection net for the ultimate enforcement of policies”.⁶ Plenty of contents in the democratic decision-making mechanism are embodied as a system form, and the effective operation of this mechanism is regulated and guaranteed through the system. The CPPCC is currently a major channel of consultative democracy in China, and the systems to ensure the CPPCC to play its due roles and serve as a democratic decision-making element mainly include: the investigation and research system, the proposal work system and the system of reporting social conditions and public opinion etc.

5.2.2 *Main Forms of Consultative Democracy in China*

Presently, the consultative democracy practice in China has formed a governance system covering multiple social levels and operating widely among the political parties, the state, the society and citizens. Its main forms include:

(a) **Political Consultation**

Under the system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC, the ruling party carries out consultations with the democratic parties and fully listens to their views on the country’s major policies, major issues

⁶Lin Shangli: The Communist Party of China and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, the Oriental Publishing Center, p. 274.

concerning politics, economy and culture and social life and candidates of top state leaders. The opinions formed through consultations are absorbed into the policy-making and law-making process of the ruling party and the state and become the basis for formulating policies and laws and making major decisions. The ruling party carries out governance through consultations with all the participating parties mainly in the form of democratic consultation conference, small talk, seminar, submission of written suggestions by the participating parties to the CPC Central Committee and so on.

(b) Administrative Consultation

The people's governments at all levels carry out consultations with citizens on governance of public affairs, public policies, public issues or social conflicts, which mainly focus on issues such as realization of common interests and vital interests of the public. The main purpose of consultation is to express, aggregate and coordinate interests through consultations, further promote scientificness and democracy of the government's policy-making, strengthen and optimize the fairness and rationality of public policies and improve the performance of governance while reflecting the requirements and will of citizens. Consultations at this level are the expansion of China's consultative democracy and the results of reform and opening up and public governance, reflecting the optimized relationship between the Chinese government and citizens in the process of political development in China and the expansion and deepening of citizens' orderly political participation. In practice, the diversified forms include democratic deliberation, consultative communication, public hearings, multilateral dialogue and policy-making consultation, discussion by the people, review by the media, network on-line hearings and so on.

(c) Social Consultation

This is an approach for citizens to independently solve public affairs, citizens' rights and interests and social conflicts within the scope of villagers' autonomy and residents' autonomy to achieve orderly development. It is centrally reflected in democratic management of social self-governance. Citizens realize self-management, self-education and self-service for the affairs of common communities and realize governance of common communities through consultation, communication and coordination. In addition, the relevant internal affairs and labor relations of enterprises and public institutions are often coordinated through consultations. Therefore, consultative governance at this level belongs to autonomous consultative governance, in which various eclectic, universal and pragmatic forms of consultation are used based on the locality, occasion and issues in question, such as residents' forum, deliberation by citizens, communities and party groups and dialogue between the government and the public on the Internet etc. (Chen Shengyong and He Baogang 2006).

China sets out from reality in consultative democracy development and is positively exploring and looking for approaches that can fully express the will of all parties and integrate the views of all parties. China always takes safeguarding the interests of the people and promoting the building of democratic politics as the start-

ing point and the ultimate goal and has absorbed the details of traditional Chinese culture into its consultative democracy development. In the grand context of the reform era, consultative democracy is becoming an important form of democracy ensuring that the people are the masters of the country and citizens can participate in political affairs orderly.

5.2.3 Main Characteristics of Consultative Democracy in China

First, there are a very broad range of political consultations which play an extensive role in social and political life. In contemporary China, political consultations exist far beyond the CPPCC and have developed at all levels and in different areas of social and political life in China. In China, political consultations are conducted on major political affairs between the ruling CPC China and the democratic parties and personages without party affiliation, and the grassroots-level practice of democratic politics also widely exists in the form of consultation on major public interests and public affairs and has gradually been institutionalized. This phenomenon has widely appeared in the grassroots-level practice of democratic politics in China since the reform and opening up. Regarding the Democratic Deliberation, typical representative is the people's consultation system for public affairs at the grassroots level, such as in Wenling, Taizhou, Zhejiang Province. According to our surveys in many areas in China, this kind of practices is increasingly popular and has become a new institutional form of grassroots-level democracy in China.

Second, the contents of political consultation in China continue to expand and enrich. In history, political consultations mainly existed at the policy level and were an important means to form policy and political alliances. This is true either in history or modern capitalist democratic practices in the Western countries. But in China's political consultative practice, consultations are widely used in selection and appointment of political leaders, which have become an important mechanism for determining political recruitment and succession. It should be noted that selection and appointment of political leaders at all levels through consultations is an important practical exploration of contemporary democracy in China, which is a supplement to the electoral democracy in China's practice of democratic politics at the current stage and plays a unique and vital role in consolidating and even expanding the social foundation of the ruling party and strengthening the legitimacy of ruling.

Third, China continues to explore the standardized and legal institutional form in political consultation practice and its morphology is constantly being improved. China's political consultative system has continuously been improved. This is first reflected in the continuous improvement of the multi-party cooperation consultation mechanism under the leadership of the CPC and the continuous improvement of the work system and mechanism of the CPPCC National Committee and the CPPCC committee at all levels. Meanwhile, the consultation mechanism in the democracy agenda of the ruling party is also being improved and institutionalized, and the consultation mechanism in the grassroots-level democratic practice is being standardized

and institutionalized. For example, the grassroots-level “democratic deliberation” system originating in Zhejiang has been combined with the deliberation system and oversight system of the People’s Congress and formed a set of relatively standardized procedures and systems, which have now been initially applied for the important public affairs at the municipal level. For example, it has been included in the department budgeting process, and the party should also carry out consultations when making decisions on major issues. Currently, this new democratic practice is being gradually promoted throughout Zhejiang Province.

References

- Chen Jiagang. (2005). Consultative democracy: Concepts, elements and value. *Journal of the Party School of Tianjin Committee of the CPC*, 3.
- Chen Shengyong and He Baogang. (2006). The development of consultative democracy. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press.
- Deng Xiaoping. (1994). All democratic parties and federations of industry and commerce are political forces serving socialism. In *Selected works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 2). Beijing: The People’s Publishing House.
- Hu Sheng. (Ed.). (1991). The seventy-year history of the communist party of China. Beijing: The Communist Party of China History Publishing House.
- Wang Yang. (2011, August 30). The Chinese-style consultative democracy has ‘High Efficiency, Low Cost and Good Effect’. *New Express Daily*.
- Zhou Enlai. (1981). The negotiations over the past year and prospects. In *Selected works of Zhou Enlai* (Vol. 1). Beijing: The People’s Publishing House.

Chapter 6

China's Democratic Development Strategy: A Gradual Increase of the People's Rights

Recognizing, safeguarding and continuously increasing the people's rights are the basic contents of democracy. But in the concept of democracy in China, rights are not absolute, sacred and abstract. In the view of the Chinese people, rights can be acquired, realized and objectified constantly in the process of social development and historical progress. The realization and development of rights is a difficult, long and complex systematic engineering. The gradual development of the rights of the Chinese people is one of the basic strategies for the development of democratic politics in contemporary China.

6.1 China's Progressive View of Rights

In contemporary China, the development of the people's rights is a progressive process. In the view of the Chinese people, the progressive development of the people's rights is decided by the law of realization and development of social rights, which is not expedient. The current dominant view of right in the Chinese society comes from the political philosophy of Marxism as the guiding ideology for the society and from the experience of the CPC members in their own practice.

6.1.1 *Rights Are Historical Rather than Innate*

In the view of the political philosophers in the Western countries, rights are innate judgment that needs not to be proven. In the political philosophy in ancient Greek, rights were self-evident. In the era when scholasticism flourished, Augustin, Thomas Aquinas and other theologians interpreted the rights falling into the theocracies from the perspective of divinity of rights. In the Renaissance era when "people" were capitalized, the humanity of rights was magnified. Rights became rights of

man and were sung by thinkers. Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Kant et al. contributed their passion and wisdom to this. But even after the Age of Enlightenment, human rights were still “God-given rights” as regarded by the United States in the Declaration of Independence: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.¹

Marx explained the meaning of right for the first time from the perspective of materialist conception of history. He said: “Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby.”²

He explained for the first time that the connotation of right was determined by economic fundamentals and conditioned by social and cultural development and other factors. That is to say, the formation and realization of right needs the material basis for social and economic development, the soft cultural environment and the consciousness of the subject of rights to a certain extent. The connotation and realization of right is decided by the comprehensive social and historical conditions adapting to the phenomenon of right. Different social and historical conditions gave birth to different concepts of right, and the nature, subject and scope of right are different due to different historical conditions and will also change with social development and progress.

In Marxist materialist conception of history, the social and historical practice rather than the mystical spiritual power has the final say in explanation and interpretation of right. Marx was opposed to regarding rights as abstract existences and discussing the possibility and reality of right from abstract concepts. “It is the relations of production that create this kind of right. Once the relations of production reach the extent that it is necessary to change the casing, this kind of right and all the material sources transacted based on it, namely the sources with a kind of reason for existence economically and historically and produced in the production process of social life, will disappear” (Marx 1995a, p. 574). The productive forces are the ultimate decisive power, the relations of production that create the relations of right depends on a certain development level of productive force and the development of relations of right is ultimately decided by the level of productive force. Marx once used freedom as an example to illustrate the positive correlation between the degree of knowledge and the degree of freedom of the necessity of objective things. Marx said: “We do not mean that law will give people whatever freedom they want. On the contrary, people won freedom for themselves each time to the extent that was dictated and permitted not by their ideal of man, but by the existing productive forces” (Marx and Engels 1960, p. 507).

Marx's concept of power deeply influenced the contemporary CPC members. The CPC members have also learned from the practice that we should not look on rights abstractly, absolutely and sacredly, and even the CPC members who take realizing the Chinese people's rights to freedom and democracy as their own mission should also comply with the objective law of right realization and development and should not act with undue haste.

¹ Selected Documents on Foreign Legal History, Peking University Press, 1982 edition, p. 440.

² K. Marx: “Critique of Gotha Program”, Selected Works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Vol. 3), the People's Publishing House, p. 305.

6.1.2 Rights Are Given by the Society Rather than by the Nature

The view of right advocated by the Western political thinkers has a natural historical association with individualism. Individualism emphasizes the basic role of man and the free and self-disciplinary existence of man. This nature is the fundamental basis for individuals to have rights. Individualism holds that rights are the concrete expression of the nature of freedom and self-discipline of man, and the direct realistic reflection of personal interests. In the Western view of right, individualism not only argues for the legitimacy of rights but also fully exaggerates the role of individuals in legitimacy and rationality. While exaggerating individuals infinitely, individualism abstracts the social attributes of individuals, regards individuals as isolated existences in form and thus endows individual rights with innateness and irreplaceability and let them become absolute rights.

Marx denied the supreme and sublime mystery of individual rights and revealed that rights cannot exist even for a moment without the social and material basis. Marx implemented the principles of materialism in the historical aspects of human society and was opposed to the view of right based on abstract and isolated man. This view of right is based on individual selfish departmentalism which views the subject of right as abstract "man", undifferentiated "man" and universal "man". This kind of "man" is an illusory rather than a real emotional person, and it conceals the reality, diversity and specificity of man and isolates man as a real existence from the real world man exists. Man as the subject of right is abstracted and unilateralized, the rights of man themselves are abstracted and simplified, concealing the diversity and complexity of the real rights. "The essence of a 'particular personality' is not its beard, its blood or its abstract physical character, but its social quality" (Marx 2002, p. 29). "Man is no abstract being encamped outside the world. Man is the world of man, the state, society" (Marx 1998, p. 1). The rich nature of man determines the claims of man for rights are rich and colorful and reflect the diversity of the real world of human life and the diversity of the real needs of man.

If man is an abstract symbol, the rights of man will also be abstract subjective assumptions without any real basis. The true view of right is based on the real material needs and living conditions of the subject of rights. The real economic, political and social life of man endows with human rights with a true reality and closely links them with the objective needs of people to realize their own values and interests. Therefore, the scientific explanation of the issues of right should set out from the reality of man and the real social conditions. "Its prerequisite is man, the real man who can be observed through experience and develop under certain conditions rather than the man living in certain unreal isolated and unchanging conditions" (Marx and Engels 1995, p. 73).

Any claim for right raised by man as the totality of social relations is fundamentally social. No right phenomenon can occur in isolation from a certain material conditions of life. Marx stressed that neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary they originate in the mate-

rial conditions of life, the totality of which Hegel, following the example of English and French thinkers of the eighteenth century, embraces within the term “civil society”; that the anatomy of this civil society, however, has to be sought in political economy (Marx 1995b, p. 32).

Marx emphasized that the foundation of law and right is the civil society equivalent to the “relationship between material and life”, which has actually determined the realistic foundation for the right phenomenon. Rights cannot be produced in isolation from particular social and material living conditions, particular the socio-economic conditions and the real living conditions of people, which determines the actual attribute and status of rights. Only by setting out from the realistic foundation of society can we truly grasp the nature of right, identify the real contents of right and find the true sources of right. If we disregard the realistic social conditions and material conditions of right, we cannot understand the true state of right and cannot form a scientific view of right.

The sociality of right shows that the rights of man cannot exist in isolation from the specific social practice. In real life, the claims for right should be treated rationally, and rights should be safeguarded and developed gradually through laws and social mechanisms. We cannot mouth high-sounding words, otherwise we cannot do what we say. In practice, the claims for different rights cannot be treated indiscriminately in protection of right, the contents, possible exercising ways and rational realization approaches of right as well as the real value and limitations of right should be analyzed rationally to synchronize the protection of right and the economic and social development process and achieve rational judgment and scientific attitude towards rights and legitimate interests.

6.1.3 Rights Are Realistic Rather than Ideal

In a real society, people's claims for right are often idealistic. There is an objective distance between claims for right and realization of right request. If a right is in isolation from the realistic foundation of life, it is, at best, a good vision of people, but the right is at the other shore. This kind of idealistic right has its rationality and important reference significance in planning realistic rights and overcoming the shortcomings of realistic rights. It helps overcome the shortcomings of realistic rights and promote the development and improvement of realistic rights towards higher standards and better states to better meet people's needs for rights. However, this state of claims for right is, after all, people's imagination of right and the “blue-print” of right, so it cannot truly meet people's actual needs for rights in social life.

The vision of rights shows the ideality of rights. In reality, we should make clear the relationship between realistic rights and idealistic rights. Marx analyzed the relationship between ideality and reality of rights. Marx pointed out that idealistic rights are people's needs for value while realistic rights are the state of specific rights of a country in real life. From the perspective of human value, Marx fully affirmed the rationality of the existence of idealistic rights. Idealistic rights embody

the ideal and perception of man as the subject of the society and reflect the basic values of justice, equality and freedom. Realistic rights are a state of right in real life, which is closely linked with the existing social and material living conditions. Marx was not too opposed to idealistic rights, but opposed to talking about abstract rights of man in isolation from social relations and social life practice. Idealistic right is not a phenomenon of right opposed to the state and society, but is man's claim for rights at a higher stage of development based on the social and historical conditions. The continuous realization process of realistic rights is a process approaching to idealistic rights.

In real life, with regard to the transformation from idealistic right to realistic right, there are often some misunderstandings. It does not mean that the idealistic right prescribed by the law can be transformed immediately into realistic right in reality. The transformation from idealistic right to realistic right needs a process and conditions and cannot be achieved overnight. Therefore, we should set out from the reality in development and protection of right and stress the reality of rights is superior to the ideality of right. We should be aware that the rights we possess are superior to those rights that are actually inoperable. These rights can be actually enjoyed by people in real life and in line with the realistic needs and meet the objective conditions for the development of right and the reality. Only the idealistic rights with realistic existence conditions can be truly accepted by the subject of right, truly meet the needs of the subject of right and can be translated into realistic rights through a series of processes. Some rights that have realistic existence conditions cannot be transformed into real rights even if they are prescribed by laws.

6.2 Real Source of the Progressive View on Rights

China is a late-comer country. A late-comer country will encounter many difficulties in the modernization process and face many uncertainties; however, late development also has its own advantage. That is a late-comer country can learn the experience and lessons from the practice of the early-comer countries and more rationally choose and correct its own development path and choose the development strategies more suitable for its needs. With regard to the development of people's rights in development of democratic politics, China's late-comer advantages lie precisely in its broader historical and international vision and its ability to calmly examine other countries' experience and prudently select and correct its own development strategies.

In international comparison, China has come to realize that the development of right is a long-term and periodical issue, which has been proved by the positive and negative experiences worldwide in the practice of development of right. The development of right is not the interpretation of the concept in people's minds, but a realistic practical process. The realization of right needs to go through a long historical process and it is unrealistic to achieve it overnight.

6.2.1 *Nonlinear Evolution of Rights*

Due to the profound influence of the Western democratic discourse system, there are enormous controversies and divergences on what path China should choose for its democratic development. Since the 1980s, the radical idea on the development of right was once very popular. This view argues that we can break the routine and achieve rapid development in realization of right in China. There are three reasons: First, compared with the economic development, it is believed that China's political reform and development of democratic politics lags behind its economic reform and development, the political system has seriously hindered the economic development, so if China is unable to achieve leapfrog development of democratic rights, China's economic development will be unsustainable. Second, compared with the Western countries, it is believed that China's democratic system lags far behind the democratic system of the Western countries, and we are unable to give to play the superiority of the socialist democratic system or effectively solve the crises and problems we are facing in the current transition period. We should fully meet people's requirements for rights in China as soon as possible, and only in this way can we fundamentally collect the opinions, pool the wisdom and solve the crises and problems. Third, compared with the advanced socialist democracy as depicted by the writers of Marxist classics, it is believed that the current democratic conditions are still far from meeting the democratic blueprint they depict, so we must try to catch up at a high starting point and with high standards, otherwise we will not reach the due level of democracy as a socialist country.

The "quick-success" theory on rights believes in the linear mode of thinking and holds that democracy can move forward linearly. However, the development of things always shows a general trend of wave-forward and spiral development; the road of development of things is often accompanied by turns and twists and not always plain sailing. "History disgusts straight lines." The development of right is by no means like a machine that, once set up, functions by itself. In fact, the realization and protection of right cannot be accomplished by just a law, and the actual development of right is an extremely slow process. Just as what Putnam said: "People can examine the development of systems week after week, month after month, sometimes year after year, however, . . . the rhythm for the change of systems is slow, and it often takes the time of several generations to make clear the significant impact of a new system on the culture and behaviors. . . . People who want to establish a new system and those who want to make the evaluation should be patient, which is one of the most important lessons from the experiment in Italy."³ The successful realization of a right is not a thing that can be accomplished overnight, instead it may require the hard work of several generations of people. Any idea and practice that hopes Rome to be built overnight is tantamount to spoiling things by a desire for quick success, and if we violate the laws of development of things, the loss will outweigh the gain.

³Making Democracy Work, translated by Wang Lie and Lai Hairong, 1992 edition, Jiangxi People's Publishing House, pp. 67–69.

6.2.2 Experience of the History of Political Development in the Countries in America and Europe

Taking a panoramic view of the history of political development in Europe and America, we will find that the core values and institutional models of right in what we call today developed Western democracies were not established smoothly, all of which have experienced a long and winding road before reaching today's level.

In terms of the history of protection of right, it took over 700 years from 1215 when the Great Chapter (or Magna Carta) started the history of protection of right in the UK to 1948 when the UK finally realized the universal suffrage. In the process of development and protection of right in the UK, taking the right to vote as an example, the relevant law of the UK in 1429 provided that citizens with an annual income of more than 40 shillings were eligible for voting. In 1679, the eligible voters in the UK must have at least an annual income of 200 lb. In 1688, the property qualification for voters of county council members was increased to an annual income from land of 600 lb and that for voters of city council members was increased to an annual real estate income of 300 lb. In 1831, the citizens eligible for voting in the UK only accounted for 4.4 % of the adults. In 1867, urban skilled workers who accounted for a third of the adult men and 15 % of the total population of the UK won the right to vote. In 1884, agricultural workers who accounted for two-thirds of the adult men and 28.5 % of the total population of the UK won the right to vote. So far, men in the UK fully won the right to vote. Women aged over 21 did not won the universal suffrage until 1928 (in 1918 the law only granted women over the age of 30 the right to vote). It was not until 1948 the UK abolished the multi-tiered voting system for university faculty and students as well as property owners that had existed for years and universal suffrage with no special restrictions was then confirmed by law (Wang 2008, pp. 56–58).

The French women did not win the right to vote until 1944 after World War II (ibid.).

In France, the government restricted the right to vote through the amount of property and tax and the time of residence, and it was not until 1871 that men achieve universal suffrage, and it was not until 1944 that women achieved universal suffrage. It was not until 1974 that the limit of age of eligible voters was reduced from 21 years old to 18 years old. It took France 153 years to realize universal suffrage. The French Revolution is often seen as the origin of modern democracy, but France's first constitution that was enacted in 1791 restricted the right to vote to the taxpayers aged 25 or above, and there were only 4.4 million male citizens had the right to vote, accounting for only 16.9 % of the total population in France at that time. The 1795s "Constitution Retrogression" restricted the right to vote to only 100,000 wealthy bourgeois and taxpayers. The revolution in February 1848 forced France to carry out universal suffrage again under the pressure of the working class, but it was abolished by the Constituent Assembly less than 2 years later to prevent the working class and the petty bourgeoisie from assuming the reins of government. The universal suffrage was not reestablished for men until 1871 when the Third Republic Period had just begun.

Even the United States claiming to be a model of democracy has gone through a long process to achieve universal suffrage. It took 350 years from the early colonial period when only adult white landowners were allowed to vote to 1965 when the "Civil Rights Act" that abolished the cultural test requirements for voting was adopted for the black people (as well as Indians, Chinese and other ethnic minorities) in the United States to completely win the legal right to vote. In general, although as early as the early nineteenth century, most of the capitalist countries in Europe and America established the principle of equality and freedom at the level of constitutional system and announced the implementation of universal suffrage. But in most part of the nineteenth century, citizens who had the right to vote in the European and American countries accounted for less than 10 % of the adult population, and this figure was still less than 20 % in the late nineteenth century (Leslie Lipson 2001, pp. 108–111). This shows that the realization of rights in these countries is mostly top-down, and the scope of voters expanded and gradually developed along the progressive track. These countries as the so-called democratic countries have a history of only 100 years or so, and the realization of democratic rights is the cumulative result of a long-term process rather than the work of a single day. The views and practices that care about only the results while disregard the process and advocate to positively transplant the models of other countries and instantly and fully realize individual rights are contrary to the law of development of right and run counter to the historical facts.

6.2.3 *Lessons on Blind Democratization of the Developing Countries*

After the 1970s, the Latin American countries copied the democratic systems and models of the Europe and the America and ran into the "Latin American Trap". The military coups and regime changes occurred frequently, the economic and social development stagnated, and the right to life and the right to development were seriously impaired, showing the dilemma of the phony political rights. Africa suffered the same predicament as Latin America. In the 1980s, some African countries were forced to accept the Western-style democracy and implemented the multi-party system, but this did not bring economic prosperity and political stability and helped realize people's rights, instead it caused serious unrests, wars and great economic depressions. After entering the twenty-first century, the democratic development in the name of "human right" and "liberation" reduced the local people to destitution and caused the chaotic unrests in the countries that were forced to accepted the Western democracy, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, and the Arabian countries where the so-called "Spring of Arab" movement occurred, such as North Africa and West Asia. The development of democratic rights showed strong national characteristics. Just as what Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel said, "Genuine democracy is not simply a machine that, once set up, functions by itself. It depends on the people" (Guo Dingping 2010, p. 36). "To create a democratic system that can sustain, the

international ‘demonstration effect’ has profound significance, but its role is limited. The questions like ‘can democracy roam?’ are more likely to be out of a good imagination rather than the reality of this world. Democracy must be based on the civil society and develop from the grassroots.” “A country may take six months to create the political democracy and six years to create the market economy, but the emergence of a real civil society needs six decades” (Mihali Ximai 1999, p. 141, 146). We must walk step by step on the road to democracy, political rights can only be achieved and developed gradually, so the idea of “cloning” the models of other countries, taking shortcuts and honoring all commitments on rights in one step is impractical. Making hasty commitments on rights by going beyond historical conditions can never achieve success. This is just an irresponsible move, and seeking instant success and quick profits are harmful to economic and social development and social stability.

Historical experience has repeatedly proven that realization of right is a historical process of continuous improvement and development, has its own law of growth and development and cannot be achieved overnight. Any utilitarian practice will eventually head for a miserable end. Leap-forward development is often associated with the words such as “aggressive”, “rush”, “radical” and “impatient” and always comes out in the form of a campaign like a strong gust of wind or rain in real political practices and will end in “out of control”, “disorder” or “collapse”. Therefore, on the road of development of democratic politics, we should avoid this kind of road for leap-forward protection and realization of right with much greater risks than benefits and turn to positive, safe, orderly and coordinated path for protection and realization of right to achieve gradual development of right and actively promote phased development of right.

6.3 Adhering to Taking the Path of Progressive Development of Rights

In the process of development of democratic politics, China always pay attention to guarantee the realization of people’s basic rights and stress that the realization of rights must be coordinated with the development of social undertakings and promoted step by step. The Chinese leaders have always stressed this point. Jiang Zemin pointed out that the Chinese people advocate the close interlinking of collective human rights with individual human rights, of economic, social and cultural rights with citizens’ political rights, which is the road we must take for the cause of promoting human rights in light of China’s national conditions.⁴ Hu Jintao also stressed that we must, relying on the concerted efforts of all the Chinese people and based on economic and social development, ensure people’s equal rights to development (Hu Jintao 2012, p. 14). The practices show that coordinated development and

⁴Jiang Zemin: “Fully Guaranteeing that People Enjoy Human Rights according to Laws”, The Selected Works of Jiagn Zemin (Vol. 2), the People’s Publishing House, p. 56.

gradually promoting the realization of people's democratic rights is an important experience for China's democratic political development, and we have walked out a road of development of democratic rights that suit our actual conditions.

In economic and social development, progressive realization and expansion of people's rights should be an important mission of democratic politics. The Chinese experience and practices in this area are described in the following section.

6.3.1 Correctly Grasping the Two Sides of Sense of Rights

Human rights reflect the interest relationship of human society. Only when the development of human history goes beyond the stage of "relationships of personal dependence" and reach the stage of "personal independence based on dependence mediated by things"⁵ can rights be fully realized. With the development of productive forces and differentiation of social interests, various interest groups classified based on economic status have appeared, and the relationship of people begin to change, providing an objective basis for awakening of people awareness and development of rights. The changes in economic development will bring about changes in people's interest relations and inevitably bring changes in sense of rights. Therefore, Marx once said that "people are fighting for everything, all with their interests" (Marx 1995c, p. 187).

"Centering on rights" of socialist market economy is the "catalyst" to generate demands for interests. Market economy, as a form of economy, makes people to have universal demands for rights, and this kind of demands will continuously develop and gradually be reflected in all aspects of social life so that the rights of individuals in social life can inevitably be established. While demands for interests continue to strengthen, the sense of rights will also grow. A stronger sense of interest will arouse people's enthusiasm and thus promote economic development and social progress, which this is a positive side of sense of rights; but if demands for interests are twisted into graspingness, demands for rights will become selfish departmentalism of rights and the positive side of rights will fade while its negative side will grow. These are the two sides of sense of rights.

In over 30 years of reform and opening up, China has established a socialist market economic system, which has aroused people's enthusiasm to engage in production and create wealth, promoted the development of productive forces and greatly improved people's living standards. Social wealth has increased rapidly, the whole society is full of vitality, people's self-consciousness, spirit of competition and sense of efficiency have been enhanced, the view of rights starts awakening, and the sense of rights has been greatly developed. The improvement of sense of rights has arouse people's enthusiasm to participate in social life and helped improve the situation of individuals and promote social progress and development of various undertakings

⁵Anthology of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Vol. 46), the People's Publishing House, 1979 edition, p. 104.

objectively. This is the positive side of sense of rights. But once the “growth” of sense of rights is away from the rights track, it will be counterproductive. The political report of the 6th Plenary Session of the 14th CPC Central Committee emphasized that “Meanwhile, the weak points and negative factors involved in market operation will find expression in people’s cultural life.”⁶ If the sense of rights is expanding excessively, it will go to extremes. The sense of rights of individuals will evolve into extreme individualism, ethnogenesis will evolve into ethnic splittism and religious beliefs will develop into religious extremism. This is the negative side of development of sense of rights. With the deepening of reform and opening up and adjustment of interest relations in China, the negative side of sense of rights is also being enhanced, which has aroused concerns of all sectors of society.



The Real Rights Law of the People’s Republic of China adopted at the 5th Session of the 15th National People’s Congress

Extreme individualism is individual-centered and self-centered. Those who advocate individualism argues openly that they are defending their rights when they are at the expense of the interests of society and others to satisfy personal desires. This distorted view of rights has seriously damaged social harmony and undermined

⁶ Selection of Important Documents since the 14th CPC National Congress, the People’s Publishing House, 1996 edition, p. 541.

the social morality and basic trust between people. When ethnogenesis goes extremes, it has more bearings on the unity of the country and stability of the society. The Chinese nation is “an inseparable unity of various ethnic groups, each with its unique characteristics” (Fei Xiaotong 1989, p. 1). As a common community of ethnic groups, the Chinese nation is indivisible, each ethnic group is an important part of the Chinese nation, and the common development of all ethnic groups is in line with the fundamental interests of the people of all ethnic groups. However, driven by their narrow ethnogenesis, some people are ignoring the fundamental interests of the people of all ethnic groups and are engaged in ethnic splitting activities, and they have created one after another bloody events that have severely hurt the interests of the country and the ethnic groups.

Therefore, the realization of people's rights must be in line with economic development, social change and legal construction, and rights must be in line with the social and economic development level. The level of development decides what kind of rights people enjoy. The degree of realization of people's rights must be in line with the level and sense of people's political participation. If people are given enormous rights while their political participation and sense of rights are not up to a certain level, these rights cannot be used effectively or will even be counterproductive.

6.3.2 Adhering to the Scientific Outlook on Development of Rights

In the development and protection of rights, China has always adhered to the scientific outlook on development of rights.

Firstly, China emphasizes the consistency of people's fundamental interests. Deng Xiaoping pointed out that: “In the final analysis, under the socialist system there is a unity of personal interests and collective interests, of the interests of the part and those of the whole, and of immediate and long-term interests. We must adjust the relations between these various types of interests in accordance with the principle of taking them all into proper consideration. Were we to do the opposite and pursue personal, local or immediate interests at the expense of the others, both sets of interests would inevitably suffer. In the final analysis, the relations between democracy and centralism and between rights and duties are the political and legal expressions of the relations between these diverse interests” (Deng Xiaoping 1994, pp. 175–176). At the present stage in China, people's interests are consistent, and there is no conflict of fundamental interests among people. From a partial and temporary point of view, each person may have different social and economic relations and thus the rights people enjoy may be different. But the rights people enjoy are in essence true and universal, and individual rights and public power and rights among people are consistent.

Secondly, China should base itself on actual conditions and focus on periodical realization of rights. Realization of rights is a gradual process like economic development. So we should base ourselves on actual conditions and should not be too impatient for success or exceed the historical stage of development. Protection of

rights is an endless career that you can never put an end to it, and it needs the persistence several generations of people. In this regard, the view of the American scholar Green is completely correct. He said: “As democracy is in essence moving forward, developing and evolving, so it may never reach perfectness. This goal is just like a mirage, and when you are approaching, it may retreat to a far distance” (Green 1993, p. 21). This view is consistent with the Chinese view. What China values is the incremental rise in development of rights based on the stocks.

Thirdly, China pays attention to coordination and unification of the ultimate goal and the phased tasks in protection of rights. On the issue of rights, a ruling party and the government should be prudent, pragmatic and optimistic and determine the tasks for realization of rights at different stages according to different stages of social development, the social, economic and cultural conditions and the themes of development at different stages to promote a healthy and orderly development of demands for rights and protection of rights. We should be opposed to the “quick-success” theory and resolutely prevent a repeat of the same mistakes of disintegration of the former USSR and reproduction of the Cultural-Revolution-style “great democracy”. We should also insist on the irreversibility of the democratic trend and resolutely safeguard the progressive and phased way of development of rights to ensure coordination between protection of rights and economic and social development.

6.3.3 *Gradual Realizing and Expanding People’s Rights*

On the issue of rights, we should act neither too slowly nor too fast, and appropriate and timely realizing and expanding people’s rights in line with the economic, social and cultural development is the most ideal state. With the deepening of reform and opening up and progress of economic development in China, in terms of protection of the rights of the Chinese people have enjoyed tremendous progress, the Chinese people have made huge progress in protection of rights and enjoy more rights than they did before the reform and opening up.

Firstly, protection of rights of the Chinese people is reflected in judicial protection. The Constitution of 1978 restored some important rights and freedoms of the Constitution of 1954 and includes the provisions for realization of rights, thus opening the prelude to the rights system and rights protection mechanism in the new era. In 1979, the National People’s Congress proposed to “comprehensively step up the legislative work”. The Constitution of 1982 further established the rights system and the security system in line with China’s actual conditions, added the contents of fundamental rights and highlighted the important position of citizens’ fundamental rights in the constitution system. In 1998, the rule of law was written into the Constitution, and in 2004, “respecting and safeguarding human rights” was written into the Constitution. In 2007, the *Real Rights Law* for safeguarding people’s real rights was enacted. In 2011, the socialist system of laws with Chinese Characteristics was established. This system centers around the Constitution, takes as its mainstay the Constitution-related laws, civil and commercial laws, administrative laws, eco-

conomic laws, social laws, criminal laws, and litigation and non-litigation procedural laws of different categories, and comprises administrative and local regulations. In the meanwhile, the judicial system, lawyer system and mediation system have greatly developed, and the system of rights and the rights protection mechanism have been improved with economic development and social progress.

Secondly, gradually improving the interest coordination mechanism. The rights coordination mechanism was established to prevent contradictions and conflicts among people arising from different interests, and it gives correct and rational definitions of rights and guide people to develop a positive sense of rights. Presently, we have formed an effective rights protection mechanism, a scientific interest coordination mechanism, a demand expression mechanism and a conflict mediation mechanism. First, we should improve the interest consultation mechanisms. For issues involving people's immediate interests at the current stage, we should bring into play the coordinating role of grass-roots-level organizations, trade unions, trade associations and other groups, protect the rights to be informed and the rights to participate of the stakeholders, urge both parties involved in a conflict of interests promote to carry out the equal dialogue and solve the conflicts and disputes according to the law. Second, we should establish a mechanism to safeguard people's interests and improve the system for guaranteeing fairness in society featuring equal rights, equal opportunities and fair rules for all so as to effectively safeguard people's rights to equal participation. Third, we should open channels for the people to voice their demands and bring into play the role of the NPC, the CPPCC, non-government organizations, industrial organizations and public media in expression of the interests of the society and establish a comprehensive, three-dimensional platform for people to voice their demands and better listen to and reflect their demands. Fourth, we should establish a conflict mediation mechanism to integrate mediation by the people, administrative mediation and judicial mediation with lawyers' participation, improve the mediation networks at all levels, strengthen the building of the volunteer mediator and mediator team, strengthen the control of social contradiction sources, fully listen to public opinions, collect people's wisdom and promote scientific and democratic decision-making.

The development of rights in the world and its development experience in China shows that the realization of people's rights is a complex, arduous, long-term and progressive process, so it is impractical to set any specific task progress or time schedule. People's rights need to be realized along the due track step by step, otherwise any hasty move may lead to negative effects, and gradual development of people's rights is the fundamental law of development of rights.

References

- Deng Xiaoping. (1994). Uphold the four cardinal principles. In *Selected works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 2). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Fei Xiaotong. (1989). *The pattern of diversity in unity of the Chinese Nation*. Beijing: Central Minorities Publishing House.

- Green, F. M. (1993). *The cycle of democracy in the United States; American history research association of China: Slavery and freedom: The American paradox speeches by presidents of organization of American historians*. Guiyang: Guizhou People's Publishing House.
- Guo Dingping. (2010). *Culture and democracy*. Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House.
- Hu Jintao. (2012). Firmly March on the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and strive to complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects-report to the 18th national congress of the CPC. Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Leslie Lipson. (2001). *The great issues of politics* (Trans. Liu Xiao et al.). Beijing: Huaxia Publishing House.
- Marx, K. (1995a). *Das Kapital* (Vol. 3) (extract). In *Selected works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels* (Vol. 2). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Marx, K. (1995b). Preface to a contribution to the critique of political economy. In *Selected works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels* (Vol. 2). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Marx, K. (1995c). Proceedings of the sixth Rhine province assembly. In *Anthology of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels* (Vol. 1). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Marx, K. (1998). *Introduction to a contribution to the critique of Hegel's philosophy of right* (Vol. 1). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Marx, K. (2002). *A contribution to the critique of Hegel's philosophy of right* (Vol. 3). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1960). German ideology. In *Anthology of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels* (Vol. 3). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1995). German ideology. In *Selected Works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels* (Vol. 1). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Mihali Ximai. (1999). Democratic progress and market. In Inoguchi Takashi, Newman Edward, & Keane John (Eds.), *The changing nature of democracy* (Trans. Lin Meng et al.). Changchun: Jilin People's Publishing House.
- Wang Shaoguang. (2008). *Four essays on democracy*. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company.

Chapter 7

Methods for Democratic Development in China: Driven by Resolving Problems and Advanced by Implementing Pilot Projects

The development of democratic politics in contemporary China is mainly promoted and implemented through the reform of the political structure. Taking the rights approach to reform the political structure is an important guarantee for the development of democratic politics. After years of repeated exploration, China has gained the important experience in advancing reforms based on issues and through pilot projects. This has become the basic strategy to promote the development of democratic politics and the important experience gained in the reform of the political structure and development of democratic politics in China.

7.1 “Crossing the River by Feeling for the Stones”: Reform Methodology

Political reform is a vast-scale social engineering, and what methods or ideas we should use to guide the reform of the political structure is an issue that has been repeatedly considered and discussed since the beginning of the reform. Although there may be various methods in practice, the methods and ideas for reform are classified in the mindset of the people. Among them, there are two typical types, i.e., the “design theory” that advocates the “top-level design” focusing on theoretical guidance and rational design and the “theory of trial and error” that advocates the practical exploration of “crossing the river by feeling for the stones”, which reflect the two types of advocates and ideas on political reform in the current and future periods.

7.1.1 Two Ideas: “Crossing the River by Feeling for the Stones” and “Top-Level Design”

From the perspective of practical process, the “theory of trial and error” that advocates “crossing the river by feeling for the stones” came into being at the beginning of the reform, while the idea of “top-level design” that advocates theoretical guidance and design was proposed and received the attention gradually in the new century.

Based on the documents available, it is Chen Yun who proposed for the first time the idea of “crossing the river by feeling for the stones”, which emphasizes the gradual exploration as the reform strategy. Chen Yun was a former member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC and the former vice chairman of the CPC Central Committee. Chen Yun said at the Central Work Conference in December 1980 that: “We should institute reforms slowly and carefully. This is because the reforms we will carry out are complicated, we should not be hasty. Reforms should be based on some theoretical researches, economic statistics and economic forecasting, but more importantly, we should set out from pilot programs and always sum up experience whenever it is necessary. That is to say, we should ‘cross the river by feeling for the stones’. We should take small steps to advance slowly at the beginning.” (Chen Yun 1986, p. 251). Chen Yun’s idea about “crossing the river by feeling for the stones” was recognized by the leadership at that time and the reforms were indeed instituted based on this idea in practice. In 1987 after the 13th CPC National Congress, when it came to reforms, Deng Xiaoping pointed out, “Ours is an entirely new endeavor, one that was never mentioned by Marx, never undertaken by our predecessors and never attempted by any other socialist country. So there are no precedents for us to learn from. We can only learn from practice, feeling our way as we go” (Deng Xiaoping 1993).

Thirty years after the reform and opening up, the practice of “crossing the river by feeling for the stones” is still being reiterated and affirmed by the central leadership. On December 31, 2012, the newly elected General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee Xi Jinping pointed out, the reform and opening up is an unprecedented new cause; we must adhere to the correct methodology and carry forward the reform and opening in continual exploration. Crossing the river by feeling for the stones is an approach of reform with Chinese characteristics and meeting China’s national conditions. Crossing the river by feeling for the stones is to feel the laws and acquire genuine knowledge from practice. Crossing the river by feeling for the stones and strengthening the top-level design is a dialectical unity, local and phased reform and opening should be promoted in the premise of strengthening the top-level design, and strengthening top-level design should be planned based on promoting local and phased reform and opening up. We should strengthen macro-thinking and top-level design, focus more on systemicality, integrity and interoperability of reform and continue to encourage experiment and break through with bold ideas so as to continuously deepen the reform and opening up.

The so-called “crossing the river by feeling for the stones” is a method of perception in which we explore the solution according to our own conditions and practices and further find and understand the laws when there is no previous experience and even no reference to fall back on. “Crossing the river by feeling for the stones” is a figurative metaphor. In scientific methodology, the experimental method of “crossing the river by feeling for the stones” is an inductive method, i.e., coming to know the laws through summarization and extraction based on a large number of experiments.

With the deepening of the reform and opening up in China, in the methodology for reform, the calls for a comprehensive understanding and theoretical summary of the reform and thus carrying out overall design have gradually appeared and are affirmed by the top leaders. The idea is summarized as top-level design.

In the documents available, the authoritative exposition about “top-level design” appeared for the first time in the 12th Five Year Plan of the CPC Central Committee. In Chapter 11 “Furthering Reforms in Difficult Areas and Improving the Socialist Market Economic System” of China’s 12th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development, it is proposed that: “We must advance the reforms in all areas with greater determination and courage, pay greater attention to the top-level design and overall planning of reform, define the priority order and key tasks of reform, deepen the integrated reforms on a trial basis, further mobilize the initiative of all sectors, respect people’s pioneering spirit, vigorously promote the economic reform, actively and steadily push forward the political reform, accelerate the reform of the cultural and social systems and make breakthrough progress in key areas and crucial links.”¹ Later, there were more calls for “top-level design” the political reform.

In recent years, the reform idea of “top-level design” was proposed under two backgrounds.

First, with continuous development of China’s industrialization, urbanization and modernization and an increasingly complicated development trend of China’s economic, political and social fields, interests are increasingly diversified, and economic and social organizations, economic and social structures and economic and social management become complicated and broken down. The legal system and policy system are also increasingly complicated and refined. In such case, there are more and more contradictions and ambiguities among laws and policies. For example, a law or policy promulgated today does not have obvious and predictable results as what happened at the beginning of the reform and opening up, and on the contrary, more and more laws and policies contradict each other. This has resulted in the lower effects of laws and policies. In this context, more coordination and communication is needed among the departments for formulating the laws and policies.

Second, in the process of reform and opening up, the experience in political reform and development of democratic politics has constantly been accumulated. People hope to carry out bold reform explorations more consciously and positively, summarize the past experience to form the theories and guide further practices with the theories. For example, regarding the characteristics and laws of development of

¹ “The Outline of the 12th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development”, <http://www.ndrc.gov.cn/fzgh/ghwb/gjjh/P020110919592208575015.pdf>.

socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics, the 16th National CPC Congress proposed the organic unity of adherence to the leadership by the Party, ensuring that the people are masters of the country and governing the country according to law. This organic unity is to a certain extent a theoretical summary and a “top-level” institutional arrangement and has guiding significance for the future political reform and democratic political development in China.

In this context, the requirements of “top-level design” gradually formed public opinions. The so-called “top-level design” is a concept from engineering. Its literal meaning is to first determine the “overall concept” of engineering design based on overall consideration of various elements and all levels of engineering design and make comprehensive planning and overall design based on the overall concept and the requirements for unified structure, resource sharing, standardization of components. Around the World War II, this engineering concept was widely used by the Western countries in military and social management, and it was a way of thinking for the governments to coordinate the policies and formulating the national development strategies. “Top-level design” is a way of thinking of system theory.

7.1.2 Specific Characteristics of Political Issues

“Crossing the river by feeling for the stones” and “top-level design” are both practices and ways of perception without a discrimination between good or bad. They can be used flexibly based on the actual conditions and needs in social practices. However, in a wide range of political development practices, “crossing the river by feeling for the stones” is mainly used as an inductive and experimental method to explore the paths and grasp the laws of political development, while the analytical and deductive method of “top-level design” is seldom used. The tendency to use the inductive and experimental methods in the political area is closely related to the intrinsic characteristics of the political activities of human beings.

Compared with other social areas, the political area has its own peculiarities, which are mainly reflected in three aspects:

First, the complexity of political phenomenon.

Political issues are highly comprehensive and relevant. Lenin had a well-known remark: politics is a concentrated expression of economics. Economic activities are the basic social practices of human beings. In the past, people tended to regard economic activities as a relationship of “materials”, namely the relationship between man and nature, and human beings developed resources and acquired wealth from the nature by means of productive activities. But Marxism profoundly revealed another major nature of economic activity. That is, human economic activities also reflect the social relationships between people. Human beings exist and are engaged in activities in specific social relations, also including providing production and development resources, acquiring wealth, creating material civilization and other economic activities. Lenin used the concept of “economy” from the perspective of

social relations, and economic activities are unique social activities of human beings. In specific social relations, people acquire the material conditions necessary for maintaining their existence and development, namely realizing their material interests. Material interests in economic activities are basically realized through exchange, the subjects in economic relations are generally based on individuals as basic units, and economic interests are generally realized one by one via numerous exchange behaviors.

Compared with the economic activities, political activities are significantly different. The purpose of political activities is to acquire interests, but interests are acquired mandatorily by means of political activities, which is the result of the use of political power to mandatorily allocate social interests. The exchange and acquisition of economic interests is largely the behavior of individuals, while political activities have always been group events. As a form of interest realization, economic activities are sustained and progressive. The results of political activity are relatively stable and periodical. After a major political shift, the political policies will have long-term and stable effects, which fundamentally decides the distribution of social interests, and politics is the total distribution of social interests.

In general sense, economic interests are concrete, and their general form is visible and tangible material interests. Political interests are not tangible material interests, and political interests are in essence the allocation schemes for various kinds of materials interests. The political realm in itself does not generate interests, political interests and even political activities themselves are transformed from other social benefits and social activities. When the problems and conflicts in the social areas remained unsolved, they will aggregate towards the political realm and seek the ultimate solutions in the political realm. This is the regular phenomenon of “political aggregation” presented in human social movements. This is why Lenin said that politics is a concentrated expression of economics. In fact, not only the problems and conflicts in the economic areas tend to aggregate towards the political realm, but many social activities in almost all social areas tend to aggregate towards the political realm. This is a common social phenomenon.

Observing the phenomenon of political aggregation, there is originally no “politics” in the world, and politics is transformed from all kinds of social problems and conflicts. Compared with other issues, political issues cover broader fields and have more associated factors. Therefore, the political realm is the most complex and unique social area. It is particularly difficult to try to carry out priori and overall design in the political development process.

Second, limitations of political perception.

In general social views, political phenomena seem ubiquitous. But in fact, compared with other social phenomena, political phenomena have relatively low repeatability. The low repetition rate of political phenomena is reflected in a low incidence of similar political phenomena and an unobvious and instable cycle of political phenomena. For example, the phenomenon of political succession is an important political phenomenon and one of the key issues in study of politics, but under the hereditary system in the ancient society, political succession normally occurred

occasionally with the emperor's illness and death. In modern politics, regardless of capitalist or socialist countries, the transfer of political power generally needs a cycle of 8–10 years, resulting in relatively rare objects for research on political succession phenomena. In scientific researches, research objects should have the characteristics of good stability and repeatability, which lacks in the political arena. In natural sciences, we can know the research objects through repeated experiments, but political sciences are not so lucky, because the research objects of political sciences are generally unlikely to reoccur or will reoccur after a very long period of time. As the research objects are unitary and transient, there is actually a lack of research objects for the studies of politics, so their reliability and validity will be greatly reduced and their difficulty will be greatly increased.

Third, subjectivity of political behavior.

Subjectivity or subjective initiative is an inevitable important factor affecting the political process, which is often referred to the “Oedipus effect”. The so-called “Oedipus effect” refers to the influence of a prediction on the predicted results. The political realm is an aggregation of social interests and a focal point of social concerns and gaming among different groups. The acting target of political decision is not the abstract society but concrete groups of people. Once a political decision is made, it will have a bearing on the interests of people, cause social repercussions and attract social participation. People will do everything possible to accommodate the political decision and try every possible means to seek advantages and avoid disadvantages. Political phenomena are complex, it is difficult to predict the results of a political decision, but the only result of all political decisions you can be sure of is that it will inevitably lead to the associatedly circumvented reaction. The inevitably circumvented response of a political decision will inevitably bring about joint costs, which may reduce the effect of the decision or trigger a new response.

The “Oedipus Effect” prevalent in the political arena has increased the difficulty of controlling the political process. Due to the “Oedipus effect”, i.e., subjective interference, the results of political process and political decision are uncertain, while if we cannot foresee the results of political process and political decision, it is difficult to form in advance a reliable overall design and an effective implementation program. A preset policy will often lead to circumvented actions and end in rapid failure, thereby reducing the value of the preset programs.

7.1.3 Premises and Conditions of “Top-Level Design”

Guiding the reform by the “top-level design” is no doubt correct in theory. But there are very few success stories in practice. As far as the idea of “top-level design” itself is concerned, if the preformed “top-level design” is used as the guidance for the practice in the next step, there must be necessary premises and conditions, and these necessary premises and conditions are harsh and rare.

In the history of mankind, some “top-level design” factors were indeed involved in some of the major political processes. The most common scenarios in which “top-level design” initiated the major political processes of the human society are social revolutions, and those great social revolutionary movements in the human history include the American War of Independence in 1776, the French Revolution in 1789, the Russia’s “October Revolution” in 1917 and the Chinese revolution that succeeded in 1949. “Top-level design” played a huge role in the historical processes in which revolutions put an end to the old era and opened a new era, and the founding of those “new societies” and “new countries” indeed benefited from a “top-level design”.

The *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* came out of the French Revolution originated in the Enlightenment thought in Europe. Montesquieu’s Doctrine of Separation of the Three Powers was embodied classically in the US political system, while the discussion of the constitutional issues in *The Federalist Papers* had a profound impact on the evolution of the US political system. After the Revolution of 1905, the Bolshevik Party led by Lenin formed the democratic centralism, which was transformed into the basic principle of the political system of the first socialist country—the USSR after the October Revolution and the Bolshevik reign. “The salvoes of the October Revolution brought us Marxism-Leninism.” With the victory of the Chinese revolution, Marxism-Leninism became the theoretical basis guiding China’s socialist cause.

Based on the history of these political systems forming as a result of “top-level design”, the ending and starting of a historical period is often the premise of the top-level design of a regime that had occurred in history. A revolution put an end to the past history and started a new history. At the moment when all the values of an old regime were lost, “a political vacuum period” would appear for the time being in the history. The pause of the history provides the opportunity for design of regime, and a revolution paves the way for a new regime, thus creating the conditions for implementing “top-level design”. Besides the premises, “top-level design” also needs certain conditions, i.e., understanding and grasping as much as possible the factors affecting the new system and new social process. In other words, it needs massive relevant knowledge and corresponding material preparation. In the late nineteenth century, thanks to the success of the Meiji Restoration in Japan, Japan’s modern industrialization program with the Charter Oath at the core was implemented, and the collapse of the former Shogun regime and the rise and transition of the grassroots elite group—the lower samurai class, no interference of external forces in Japan’s Meiji era and other conditions supported the social change in Japan. But the Westernization Movement in China a similar reform movement over the same period, finally ended in failure due to the split and suspicion within the ruling class in the Qing Dynasty, the weakening and decentralizing of the central power triggered by the resistance of the lower classes and the constant harassment of external powers. As the same movements of eastward spread of the Western Culture and the similar programs enriching the countries and strengthening their military forces, the two movements started almost at the same time but had completely different results, and the historical conditions became the deciding factors.

In summary, top-level design requires experience and theoretical preparation. Based on some experience and theoretical knowledge, top-level design has the advantages of shaping the internal consistency of a policy system, reducing the inherent conflicts in a policy system and improving the overall efficiency. But compared with “crossing the river by feeling for the stones”, “top-level design” requires stricter conditions. Top-level design involves setting a goal and overall requirements. That is, hierarchical design and each part in overall design must meet the goals and requirements of top-level design. The concept of top-level design originates in architecture, but political and social design is completely different from architectural design. Each part of architectural design is not yet really existent, and architectural design, based on the goals and requirements of top-level design, must be further divided into multiple hierarchical layers and meet the overall requirements. In social and political fields, the prevailing laws, policies and related things have already existed, and there is a gap between the prevailing laws, policies and real things and the objectives and requirements of top-level design. If top-level design must serve as the criterion and the top-level design requirements must be met, any change in the existing policies and laws will be a very difficult issue in actual operation. If everything goes according to the top-level design, all parts will be unable to undergo reform and exploration based on their own reality, but “march forward at the same pace” according to the overall requirements. In this way, top-level design may bring two consequences: first, raising the cost of political reform and construction and urging the parts that were originally not yet ready to keep up with the overall pace; second, the part unable to meet the goals and overall requirements of top-level design will become a “drag”, causing the contradiction between the part and the whole.

7.2 Problem-Driven Path Selection

The reform and opening up starting at the beginning of the 1980s and the process of development of socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics mainly began in the real difficulties and the needs to solving problems.

7.2.1 *Phenomenon Is Greater than Nature: Starting from Alleviating the Symptoms*

On May 10, 1978, the article “Practice is the Sole Criterion for Testing Truth” written and amended by some theorists at the Party School of the Central Committee of the CPC and personally reviewed and approved by Hu Yaobang was published in Issue 60 of Theoretical Trends of the Party School of the Central Committee of the CPC. Later, it was reprinted in full text in *Guangming Daily*, *People’s Daily*, *People’s Liberation Army Daily* and other important newspapers, and Xinhua News

consumption and caused serious wastes and a sharp decline in economic benefits. In the decade, there was a general decline in people's living standards. In 1976, China's per capita annual consumption of grain was only 190.5 Rilo gram, even lower than 190.75 Rilo gram in 1952. In 1978, 250 million people in rural areas did not have adequate food and clothing. The average wage of staff and workers nationwide declined, there was a short supply of all kinds of daily necessities in urban areas, and the rationing system was fully implemented. The development of resident housings, education, culture, health care and other public utility sectors had seriously stagnated. The "Cultural Revolution" and the previous so-called "political movement" caused numerous miscarriages of justice, and the "movement of educated youth going and working in the countryside" in the "Cultural Revolution" caused very serious social problems. By the end of 1978, driven by the event that many young intellectuals in Yunnan went on strike and came to Beijing for petitions, a large number of people came to Beijing for petitions, resulting in a tense social atmosphere.

The Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee was held in such a social atmosphere. At the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee and the subsequent theory-discussing meeting, different opinions were formed in the Communist Party of China and the Chinese society. Among them, there was a widely influential thought advocating completely correcting the "Leftist" line, distinguishing between rights and wrong theoretically and correcting the historical errors.

The implicit logic of the advocacy for fully straightening out the past mistakes is: only by recognizing the past mistakes mentally and theoretically and correcting fundamentally the wrong leftist line and all kinds of errors can we choose the rights development path for the future. The other side of advocacy for fully correcting the past mistakes is to carry out comprehensive planning for the future development path. Around the Third Plenary Session of the CPC Central Committee, some theorists in the Party proposed the "make-up theory" which advocated receding from the so-called "new democratic new stage" and making up the missed lesson for development of capitalism.

Should we fully straighten out the past so as to distinguish between rights and wrong theoretically and politically and re-plan the future or should we shift the focus of the Party's work to solving specific problems in reality? At the beginning of the reform and opening up in 1979, China was actually facing two ideas and two options for reform. The leadership of the Communist Party of China represented by Deng Xiaoping chose the latter. Deng Xiaoping summarized these two ideas as: "settling old scores" or "looking forward".

At the closing ceremony of the Working Conference of the CPC Central Committee prior to the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee held in December 1978, Deng Xiaoping made his famous speech "Emancipating the Mind, Seeking Truth from Facts, and Looking Forward in Unity", which set the tone for the upcoming Third Plenary Session. In his speech, Deng Xiaoping expounded on how to view the past mistakes, how to view the Cultural Revolution and how to treat Mao Zedong's problems. Deng Xiaoping pointed out that we must solve these

problems left over from the past thoroughly; however, we cannot possibly succeed and should not expect a perfect settlement of every case. He proposed that “we must have the major aspect of each problem in mind” and “solving old problems will help people look to the future” (Deng Xiaoping 1983). At the theory-discussing meeting in early 1979, there was controversy over the reform. On March 27, Deng Xiaoping pointed out when talking with Hu Yaobang and Hu Qiaomu et al., for preparing the speech at the theory-discussing meeting that there should be a dominant ideology among ideology theorists. The dominant ideology and central task of theoretical work is to guide people to look forward. There is a tendency of being obsessed with settling old scores. The propaganda on the spirit of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee was inadequate, and there were some paradoxical and even radical wordings. This is inimical to looking forward in unity, to evoking people’s enthusiasm and to working whole-heartedly for the realization of the four modernizations.³ Deng Xiaoping clearly pointed out: theories must serve politics. The primary task in politics in China now is to look forward in unity and work whole-heartedly for the realization of the four modernizations (CCCPC Party Literature Research Office 2004).



December 1978, Deng Xiaoping on the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee

Since the beginning of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, China had chosen the direction for its reform and opening up, i.e. to set out from solving practical problems, guide the social attention to economic development and improve people’s living standards. This has gradually become the strategic principle for China’s reform and opening up and democratic political development. If only observing from China itself, you might not really understand the significance of China’s selection of this reform strategy. Compared with the

³ Modernizations of industry, agriculture, defence, science and technology.

reform strategy of the USSR that came out slightly later than China, you can have a deeper understanding of the Chinese experience.

The reform of the USSR began in the mid 1980s. The 27th Congress of the CPSU held on February–March 1986 marked the beginning of the large-scale reform in the USSR. Gorbachev, general secretary of the CPSU at that time, delivered the Political Report, which gave a comprehensive exposition of the reform in the USSR. He first introduced the historical stage of social development of the USSR, i.e. the starting point in the history of a developed socialist country; he gave an exposition of the theoretical basis for reform, i.e. the contradiction of socialist production relations and productivity and criticized the theory on automatic adaptation of production relations; he stressed that the reform of the USSR should be a fundamental change, they should speed up the strategic development to change from extensive to intensive operation and change the economic management to improve labor productivity. He stressed that the reform should be a comprehensive one and the political reform should match the economic reform. Finally, he also mentioned the issue on the criterion for testing the reform, i.e. socialist production practice is the sole criterion for testing the reform.

In 1987, at request of a publisher in the United States, Gorbachev released a book, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, elucidating the history of the USSR and his main ideas for reform. The book gave new comments on a series of major historical issues, including the industrialization and agricultural collectivization of the Stalin period in the 1930s, the 20th Congress of the CPSU, the internal and external policies of the Khrushchev period, the economic reforms starting in 1965 of the Brezhnev and Kosygin period, and elaborated on the origin and essence, measures and steps, problems and prospects of the reform in the USSR at that time. It also elucidated the new thinking of the USSR on foreign policies, including the relationships between the USSR and China, the United States, Europe, Asia, Middle East, Latin America and other countries and regions.

Compared with the reform in China, the USSR made a good theoretical preparation for the reform, fully analyzed the historical and actual problems, put forward the guiding ideology and theories for the reform and designed the overall plan for the reform. According to Deng Xiaoping, the USSR's reform started from "settling old scores". After the 27th Congress of the CPSU, the USSR started a broad discussion among the whole Party and all citizens to identify the cause for stagnation of social development in the USSR and determine the direction and program of reform. The discussion in the USSR was deepened, from the slow development in the Brezhnev period to the subjectism in the Khrushchev period, the Great Purge in the Stalin period and finally to the October Revolution. A very strange social landscape appeared in the reform in the USSR. On the one hand, people continually discussed various historical and theoretical issues, debated on ideological issues and proposed a wide range of reform programs, and on the other hand, the economic and social conditions in the USSR fully deteriorated and the basic consumption of residents could not be safeguarded.

The climax of the reform in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) should belong to the "top-level design" for the reform launched by the USSR in 1990, "the 500-day Program". On July 28, 1990, Mikhail Gorbachev, president of the USSR, and Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation, reached an agreement and decided to establish an expert group led by Shatalin, a member of the

Presidential Council of the USSR, and formulate the “500-day Program” for transition to the Market Economy Transition to the Market Economy-Vision and Program on the basis of the 500-day Program of the Russian Federation. The program was designed to fully complete the reform and transition of the USSR from a planned economy to a market economy within 500 days in four stages. After fierce controversy, Gorbachev proposed Basic Guidelines for the Stabilization of the Economy and Transition to a Market Economy to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on October 19, 1990, which was implemented as an overall program of transition to a market economy. In the first phase of the implementation of this package i.e. the year 1990, the economy of the USSR fully tumbled into recession. When this famous 500-day Program had not yet ended, the USSR had disintegrated.

Comparing the reform in the USSR and China, China’s reform was not stuck in theoretical controversy and settlement of problems left over by history from the very beginning, but focused on solving practical problems needed to be addressed most urgently in the country, thus avoiding controversy and confusion of the society again. The process of solving practical problems is also a process of deepening the understanding of social development direction and laws and creates conditions for setting the development direction and ultimate goal. The reform of the USSR attempted to solve all ideological and theoretical obstacles hindering the reform and designed the program in advance, but the result led to the social controversy that created obstacles for the reform.

“Top-level design” and “crossing the river by feeling for the stones” are two kinds of reform ideas and strategies. “Top-level design” focuses on theories, involves the essence of things and stresses solving the problems fundamentally. “Crossing the river by feeling for the stones” focuses on practice, starts from phenomena and stresses solving specific problems. “Top-level design” lays stress on effecting a permanent cure, but effecting a permanent cure needs the necessary conditions: first, a correct understanding and grasping of the nature of the problem is needed; second, there exist the conditions for a permanent cure. In practice, this “best solution” is generally difficult to acquire. “Crossing the river by feeling for the stones” lays stress on treating the symptoms, i.e. setting out from the phenomenon. Phenomenon is not the nature, but the phenomenon is more critical than the nature and contains the nature. Setting out from the phenomenon enables us to ultimately make clear the nature. Problem-driving is a kind of “second-best” choice.

7.2.2 Turning Small Victories into a Big One: Reducing the Costs of Reform

Starting the reform by solving the practical problems is generally better than developing a reform package in accordance with the “top-level design”. The underlying cause for this lies in the complexity of the political problem and the costs and risks brought about by such complexity.

From the perspective of the development history of political regime, the changes in political system and regime generally arose from response to the major events and settlement of the major issues. The political reforms in the Chinese and

foreign histories that were not fully based on practices were often untenable. The history of political development also shows that the choice and formation of a policy or system mainly depends on three factors: first, provide solutions for some social issues; second, select the solution with relatively lower implementation costs from a wide range of alternatives; third, select the policy or system with lower risks. The starting point and the path of reform are also selected by objectively following the three factors.

A “top-level design” reform program is inevitably a process to drive the comprehensive and overall reform and inevitably involves all or important areas of reform. Apart from being more strictly conditioned, it also faces more difficulties and uncertainties, so the implementation costs and risks of a “top-level design” program are generally higher than those of the problem-driven approach.

A problem-driven program generally involves fewer aspects, demands less strict conditions and faces fewer difficulties and uncertainties. Therefore, the implementation costs and risks of a problem-driven reform program are general lower than those of the “top-level design” approach. In general, the value of problem-driven reform and democratic political construction is that the costs of reform are reduced and the desired objectives of reform are achieved through the cumulative effects of addressing the concrete problems.

Compared with “top-level design”, the problem-driven approach also has its weaknesses. The weakness of the problem-driven approach is that different areas of reform and construction and different policies are often inconsistent and even contradictory, which requires gradual coordination and running-in in practice.

Since China’s reform and opening up, in most cases, reform was initiated to meet in an urgent need of addressing the real problems. The gradual institutionalization of the grassroots-level people’s consultation system for public affairs in the grassroots-level self-governance practice in China—the emergence and institutionalization of democratic deliberation is a typical case, which can better explain the value of the problem-driven policy.

Since the implementation of grassroots-level self-governance, a number of new problems have appeared in the grassroots-level self-governance in the rural areas nationwide, mainly including the serious problems in villagers’ committee election, grassroots-level exercise of democratic rights, democratic decision making after election, inability to implement democratic management and oversight. In this regard, although the governments at all levels treat these problems seriously, they failed to take effective countermeasures to address these increasingly serious problems.

In June 1999, the education on modernization of agriculture and rural areas was carried out in Zhejiang province. The Municipal Party Committee of Wenling City in Taizhou decided to launch a pilot project in Songmen Town. In the survey, the Party Committee of Songmen Town and the Working Group of the Municipal Party Committee of Wenling City realized that great changes have taken place in economic and social environments since the reform and opening up, the people are alienated and apathetic from the party organizations at the grassroots-level, especially in rural areas, and the people have many complaints about the cadres.

How to solve these problems, the Party Committee of Songmen Town believes that they should attach great importance to the new situation at the grassroots level and in rural areas and must adopt new ways to solve these new problems in the new situation. It was suggested to bringing together the masses in a form similar to a press conference to make comments or suggestions on the common public affairs of the villages and the town. Inspired by this idea, the Party Committee of Songmen Town and the Working Group of the Municipal Party Committee of Wenling City decided to set up the Education Forum for Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Areas, which was the initial form of democratic deliberation. In mid-June, the First Education Forum for Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Areas was officially held in Songmen. The forum achieved good results on site, there were more than 100 persons spontaneously attending the form, and all participants were eager to air their views at the forum on a wide range of matters from the development plans of the towns and villages to neighborhood disputes. Since then Songmen Town has held the Education Forum for Agricultural and Rural Modernization for four consecutive years, which were attended by more than 600 people. During the four sessions of the forum, 110 issues were raised, among which 84 were explained and replied on the spot and 26 were promised to be handled. In August 2000, the Municipal Party Committee of Wenling City held a spot meeting in Songmen Town, during which the heads of towns, sub-districts and functional departments of the municipal government of Wenling were organized to watch and study. At the meeting, various forms of activities, such as “Villager Democracy Day”, “Farmer Podium” and “Public Opinion Express”, were uniformly named “Democratic Deliberation”.

In early 2001, under the support and guidance of the Party Committee of Taizhou City, the Party Committee of Wenling City standardized the form and contents of democratic deliberation and formed the criteria for democratic deliberation at the three levels of village, town and city/county.

Democratic deliberation at the village level is to make decisions on important village affairs and public welfares. The participants of democratic deliberation are village leaders, villager representatives and other villagers. The participants of democratic deliberation at the township (sub-district) level mainly include the deputies in local people’s congresses, related stakeholders and people involved in the decision-making matters, other people can voluntarily participate in democratic deliberation, and the implementation process and results of decision-making are overseen by the presidium of township people’s congress. Democratic deliberation at the city/county level involves government departments, and the contents of deliberation include the formulation and introduction of a new policy or adjustment of the existing management system, management methods and procedures, adjustment or adding of new services, charge items and other government or public affairs having a bearing on public interests.

Democratic deliberation is a form of democracy in grassroots-level self-governance in which people are involved in decision-making for public affairs, exercise democratic oversight over public affairs when they are being handled and carry out democratic appraisal of public affairs after they have been handled. Democratic deliberation

has addressed the deep-rooted problem of unbalance of the “four democracies” in grassroots-level self-governance so as to truly implement the grassroots-level democratic decision-making, democratic management, democratic oversight and democratic election and establish a more sound and effective grassroots-level democratic system. This institutional innovation comes entirely from the exploration of people and a response to concrete problems. This grassroots-level democratic system was created by people in their exploration and attempts to tackle serious problems in the absence of theoretical guidance, empirical support and pre-planning.



The Grassroots-Level Democratic Deliberation System established by Songmen Town Wenling, Taizhou, Zhejiang Province

7.3 Procedural Principle for Pilot Program Promotion

Another strategic priority of political reform and development of democratic politics is to follow the procedural principle of gradual implementation of pilot programs in the reform and construction process. The complexity of political problems decides that any proposition or policy has a certain degree of uncertainty, and there has never been a “panacea” in the political arena. Therefore, while following the principle of all setting out from practice, we must also adhere to testing the existing policies on an experimental and pilot basis.

7.3.1 Epistemology: Seeking Unity of Subject and Object

The human society is different from the nature. Once the laws of nature are understood and grasped, the relevant knowledge and scientific knowledge acquired can often be directly applied to practices. The social fields are different. Even though knowledge in social sciences is considered to be correct in theory, it might not work in practice, or it may work for the time being, but might become unviable as time goes. Therefore, social practices, especially the institutional reform, must be implemented on a trial basis and endure the test of time.

Experiments in social fields are also different from those in natural sciences. Based on experiments in natural sciences, we can infer the whole from the part. We can do experiments in laboratories and artificially create and maintain a relatively independent test object and static state. The human society is constantly changing, and human beings in the society have subjectivity or subjective initiative, which make social activities more complicated. Any pilot program in social fields has limitations. A pilot program successful in a place and time may become unviable in another place and time. Local experience in social fields is often not applicable universally. Many successful experiences are largely limited to a special local environment, and there will be great changes once they are promoted. Therefore, even if the experience in political reform has been proven successful locally on a trial basis, it cannot be promoted rashly, but should be gradually implemented, observed, adjusted and improved in practice. The trial process is a process that the subjective knowledge is constantly tested by the objective reality and a process to seek the integration of subjectivity and objectivity.

7.3.2 Trial and Error Method: Dispersing the Risks of Reform

Since the 1990s, a number of pilot programs have been launched for China's political reform, and almost all reform attempts and initiatives have been tested. This is a very correct practice. A pilot program or a pilot scheme is one which is used to test a policy or an idea in practice before deciding whether to introduce it on a larger scale. A pilot program or a scheme gives people the opportunity to correct the errors. Historical experience shows: in any political reform, we must avoid a "package" program because one link broken, the whole chain is broken, and there is even no chance to correct. As long as a political reform is piloted, it will not cause a drastic mistake, and even if it ends in failure, it exactly means we can avoid a bigger mistake. The failure of a pilot program or an experiment means a more profound understanding of errors. This is the method of trial and error, which is a necessary means of risk aversion.

Growth and development of any new thing is by no means a plain sailing, and it is impossible not to make mistakes in reform. The key is to set aside an opportunity to correct errors and deviations. In a certain sense, the appearance of problems in

reform and deviations in development of democratic politics, except the failure of a “package” program or a holistic mistake, is not a bad thing. The problems and mistakes that have appeared help deepen the understanding of the laws of reform and construction and bad things can be turned into good things. A pilot program or a pilot scheme is to test knowledge by practice so as to deepen understanding, prevent drastic and global errors, diffuse the risks and avoid a crisis. All major decisions must be piloted and implemented gradually. This is the extremely important and valuable experience acquired by China in its political reform and democratic political construction, and China is bound to adhere to it for a long time in the future.

References

- CCCPC Party Literature Research Office. (2004). *Chronological biography of Deng Xiaoping 1975–1997* (Vol. 1, pp. 498–500). Beijing: The Central Literary Contributions Press.
- Chen Yun. (1986). Economic situation and lessons learned. In *Selected works of Chen Yun (1956–1985)*. Beijing: The People’s Publishing House.
- Deng Xiaoping. (1983). Emancipating the mind, seeking truth from facts, and looking forward in unity. In *Selected works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 2, pp. 147–148). Beijing: The People’s Publishing House.
- Deng Xiaoping. (1993) Two features of the 13th national congress of the communist party of China. In *Selected work of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 3, pp. 258–259). Beijing: The People’s Publishing House.

Chapter 8

Outlook on Democratic Development in China

China has found a road of political development suitable for its own industrialization and modernization and established a democratic political system with Chinese characteristics. China is still in the industrialization and modernization development processes. With the development of various causes and the change of time, democratic political development in China will continue to press ahead. China's democratic political development and political reform is in essence a product of social development and progress of the contemporary China, and the political system must constantly adapt to changes in the economic and social structures. Democratic politics is shaped by social development, but in turn provides support and protection for social development.

Further promoting the development of democracy needs the rights strategies and policies. Whether the strategies and policies for continuously promoting the development of democracy are correct or not depend on whether they have set out from the reality and comply with the requirements of development. When selecting the strategies and policies for democracy building and political reform, we should on one hand take into consideration the constraints such as the political development path and the internal logic of formation of the existing system and on the other hand solve new problems to meet the requirements of development.

However, any political system or political model is inevitably the product of social development in a certain stage. China's current political system has its historical rationality and is a product of national conditions, age and environment. The democracy in contemporary China is the democracy in the era of China's industrialization and modernization, and its emergence and development and its own characteristics are inseparable from China's industrialization and modernization. Based on this principle, China's democratic politics will inevitably develop and change with China's industrialization and modernization. People today are still unable to predict specific outcomes of China's political development and evolution of its democratic political model in future, but they can analyze and forecast the future of China's political development and democracy building according to the industrialization and modernization trends.

8.1 Factors Driving the Development of China's Democracy System

What is the future of democracy in China? How will China's political reform be carried out and towards what direction will it develop? These are issues arousing intensive concern. To foresee the future of China's politics, we should proceed from the objective reality rather than subjective wishes or inferences made from a theory. The so-called proceeding from the reality is to fully analyze and make clear what are the factors triggering the institutional innovation and reform in China's political development practice. That is, in layman's terms, what factors are driving China's political reform and democratic political development?

There are diverse social factors driving China's political development, so to speak. The driving factors for the reform in different periods of time since the reform and opening up have changed to a certain extent, among which there are some subjective factors, particularly the subjective consciousness and political philosophy of the top leaders and the collective leadership in the early years of reform and opening up, which has significant impact on the political reform in the early stage. But with the advancement of political reform, especially after 1989, the subjective tone of political reform has gradually faded, and the factors in response to the objective situation and the objective conditions are increasing, which is especially obvious in the top-level political decision-making. Recalling the factors driving the development of democratic politics and political reform since the reform and opening up, there are generally important factors in the three aspects: the need to separate and check power; the need to achieve scientific decision-making and increase the ability to govern; the need to combat corruption and build an honest and clean government to strengthen the building of the ruling party.

8.1.1 *The Need to Check Power*

In August 1980, the speech made by Deng Xiaoping at the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, which was later named "Reform of the Leadership System of the Party and the State", marked the beginning of China's political reform. In this speech, Deng Xiaoping pointed out that, "As far as the leadership system of the Party and the state and the cadre system are concerned, the main drawbacks are bureaucracy, over-centralization of power, patriarchal methods, life tenure in leading posts and privileges of various kinds" (Deng Xiaoping 1983, p. 327). In the four main phenomena cited by Deng Xiaoping, over-centralization of power is critical, and over-centralization of power in a certain extent is the root of other phenomena and the major drawback and problem. Therefore, to solve the so-called "over-centralization of power" has always been the core issue of political reform since the reform and opening up. The strategy to solve over-centralization of power is moderate separation and check of power, which has become a basic line running through the political reform.

In the early years of the reform, the basic idea to solve the phenomenon of over-centralization of power is to separate the functions of the Party from those of the government. In his speech “Reform of the Leadership System of the Party and the State”, Deng Xiaoping has arranged the four tasks of political reform, the core contents of which are to “achieve that power should not be overly centralized” and “address the problems of no separation of the functions of the Party and the government and the Party’s substation for law”. In 1986, under the background of preparing the 13th National CPC Congress and the atmosphere of public opinions on accelerating the political reform to adapt to the economic reform, Deng Xiaoping gave four speeches to discuss the political reform, and the time around the 13th National CPC Congress is another climax in China’s political reform. Deng Xiaoping clearly stated in 1986 that “The contents of political reform should be as follows. First, we should separate the Party and the government and decide how the Party can exercise leadership most effectively. This is the key and should be given top priority. Second, we should transfer some of the powers of the central authorities to local authorities in order to straighten out relations between the two. Third, we should streamline the administrative structure, and this is related to the devolution of powers” (Deng Xiaoping 1993, p. 177). The reform idea of separating the functions of the Party and the government was adjusted after 1989. One of the main contents of political reform was shifted from the separation of the functions of the Party and the government to appropriate decentralization and check of power.

Since Locke and Montesquieu successively proposed the doctrine of check and balance of powers, the theory on checking power by power has long belonged to the scope of “Western theories”, i.e. the bourgeois political doctrines. Meanwhile, the institutional design and arrangement of separation and balance of powers has also been identified as the characteristics of capitalist democratic system. The *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* came out of the French Revolution proclaimed that: “A society in which the observance of the law is not assured, nor the separation of powers defined, has no constitution at all.”

In the Marxist discourse system, the theories of the early classical writers Marx and Engels resisted the concept of balance of powers. In the opinions of Marx, Engels and other classical writers, under the socialist conditions, all powers come from the people and belong to the people. Thus, addressing power control, namely eliminating “alienation”,¹ is to ensure that people have the power and control the power. In the short-lived proletarian revolutionary practice in the Marx era—the lessons learned and theoretical abstraction in the Paris Commune, Marx proposed the “Principles of the Paris Commune”, i.e. to maximally eliminate the differences between the leadership and the led so as to ensure that the socialism created to

¹ In Marx’s view, capitalism is an alienation of human beings, and political power is an alienation of human rights. In “Civil War in France”, Marx wrote: “The state power, apparently soaring high above society, is in fact the ugliest thing in this society, the very hotbed of all its corruptions.” According to the basic principles of Marxism, in the capitalist mode of production and way of life, human nature is vanished and replaced by “commodity fetishism”. Only by eliminating the capitalist system can human beings get rid of the generalization of “general equivalents” and realize free and comprehensive development.

eliminate “alienation” will not be “alienated” again. Once the difference between the ruler and the ruled was eliminated, as what Marx once said, the greatness of the Paris Commune lied in “showing a trend towards the government of the people and by the people” (Marx 1995, p. 64). Since a socialist country is a country of the people and by the people, “to check power by power” is naturally out of question, and power check in itself falls into the scope of power alienation.

However, practices show that the need for power check objectively exists in all the real political systems, and the practice of power check also objectively exists, with only difference in method and degree. Lenin was the founder of the first socialist country-USSR. Shortly after the founding of the USSR, Lenin discovered the difference in the proletariat under socialist conditions. Lenin realized that, even under socialism, there were differences and objective contradictions between the leadership and the led in the proletariat. A leadership consisting of elites and shouldering great responsibilities and demanding professional skills is a stable social class, which is different from the masses. After and before the revolution, Lenin’s ideas in *The State and Revolution* were completely different. In *The State and Revolution*, Lenin conceived socialist social management as “postal mode”. That is, the extremely complex whole is broken down into very simple parts that can be shared by ordinary workers, thus eliminating the social differences arising from work division, education and professional skills and the separation and confrontation between the governor and the governed. Facing the reality, on the one hand, Lenin acutely abolished the “Principles of the Paris Commune” once implemented after the October Revolution and gave higher special treatments to the cadres, technical and management professionals than workers. On the other hand, Lenin pointed out the problem of “bureaucracy” and required to exercise democratic oversight and check of the vanguards that in fact overran their own class. The “procuratorate for workers and peasants” established by Lenin at that time objectively reflected the unity of opposites between the “proletariat” and the “vanguards” in this historical period and embodied Lenin’s realistic supervisory idea and institutional arrangement.

In the USSR and the socialist political systems affected by the Soviet model as well as in China and the CPC’s political and discourse systems, the de facto power check relationship has always existed in the institutional arrangements and theoretical expressions of democratic centralism. The institutional arrangements and theoretical expressions of power check have been publicly identified and further institutionalized in the political practice and political reform in China after 1989.

In 1989, the political turmoil and the ensuing drastic changes in the USSR and East Europe changed the thinking and direction of China’s political reform and democratic political construction. The Chinese government has shifted its strategic focus from separation of the functions of the Party and the government and social dialogue to strengthening the party’s leadership, namely reforming and improving the political system with the leadership of the Communist Party of China at the core, which has become the basic idea and trend since the 1990s. While exploring the reform practice aiming to strengthen and improve the Party’s leadership, the basic requirement is to ensure the party’s unwavering leadership and ruling position, and

the check within the power system in this target scope has gradually become the objective requirement and trend of reform. The check within the power system can not only prevent and replace the “external” problems arising from separation of the functions of the Party and the government and social dialogue, but also achieve oversight and restriction internally.

At the end of 2000, President Jiang Zemin, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee at that time, stated clearly for the first time at the 5th Plenary Session of the 15th Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the CPC that: “By deepening the reform and institutional innovation, we will establish a mechanism for the exercise of power featuring reasonable structure, scientific distribution, rigorous procedures and effective restraint” (Jiang Zemin 2006a, p. 190). This is the first time for the top leader of the CPC to clearly state in an important speech the establishment of a mechanism for the check of power through institutional innovation. The report of the 16th CPC National Congress in 2002 specifically discussed the issue of checks on the exercise of power. The report of the 16th CPC National Congress reiterated once again that “We should establish a mechanism for the exercise of power featuring reasonable structure, scientific distribution, rigorous procedures and effective restraint so as to tighten oversight on power in terms of decision-making, execution and other links and ensure that the power best owned on us by the people is truly used for the benefits of the people.” It further discussed the institutional arrangements for tightening checks and oversight on the use of power, including checks on the exercise of power of personnel administration and financial management by chief persons in charge, checks on powers among the government and Party’s leading organs and the Party’s discipline inspection agencies, judicial agencies and administrative supervision and inspection departments, and checks and oversight among the different levels in the Party and government agencies through the system for opening the government affairs, the system under which leading cadres report on their work and their efforts to perform their duties honestly and the system for reporting major matters (Jiang Zemin 2005, p. 28). This is the first time for the CPC National Congress to confirm and explain “tightening checks and oversight on the use of power”. In September 2004, the “Decision of the CPC Central Committee on strengthening the Party’s Ruling Capacity” adopted at the 4th Plenary Session of the 16th CPC Central Committee once again highlighted the check on power. The decision states that: “We will tighten checks and oversight on the exercise of state power to ensure that the powers bestowed on us by the people are used for the benefit of the people. The party organizations and leaders at all levels should consciously accept the oversight of the party members and the general public. We should broaden and improve the channels of oversight and put the exercise of power under effective checks and oversight.”² At the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, the Communist Party of China officially confirmed the concept of check and balance of power, which can be regarded as a breakthrough of the

²“Decision of the CPC Central Committee on Strengthening the Party’s Governing Capacity”, Selection of Important Documents since the 16th CPC National Congress (Vol. 2), the Central Literature Publishing House, 2006 edition, p. 282.

Communist Party of China in democratic theory. It is stated in the report of the 18th CPC National Congress that: “We should make sure that decision-making, executive and oversight powers check each other and function in concert and that government bodies exercise their powers in accordance with statutory mandate and procedures” (Hu Jintao 2012, p. 26).

On the whole, since the reform and opening up in China, especially the 1990s, to realize checks on the use of power through the political reform is mainly reflected in four aspects in the mechanism for the exercise of power:

- (a) **The Core Internal Check on the Use of Power.** The core of the political power structure of the political system in China is the leading organs of the Communist Party of China at all levels. The check on the use of power in contemporary China is first reflected in the check on the use of power between the top leaders and the leadership collective of the leading organs of the Communist Party of China at all levels. That is, the system combining collective leadership with individual responsibility has been gradually established and improved since the reform and opening up, which is marked by “the rules of order of the party committees”. Although the system combining collective leadership with individual responsibility has long been specified and advocated, it was not implemented until 1990.
- (b) **The Check Among the Power Sectors.** This is a relatively sensitive part in China’s political system stressing the leadership of the Communist Party of China, but since the reform and opening up, especially in the past 20 years, China started the division of authority among the major power sectors, and under the premise of unified leadership of the CPC Central Committee, the system for separation and check on power among the power sectors has initially formed. This is mainly reflected in two aspects: first, the improvement of the actual role of the people’s congress and the increase of the legalization level is reflected in the check and oversight of the people’s congress on “the people’s government, the people’s court and the people’s procuratorate”; second, the relative independence and authority of discipline inspection and supervision departments are expanded.
- (c) **The Check on Power between the Central and Local Departments.** Streamlining administration and delegating more power to lower levels is one of the top priorities of political reform. Due to China’s vast territory and uneven development, the main area of streamlining administration and delegating more power to lower levels is the delegation of power by the central government to local governments to arouse the enthusiasm of local governments, which is one of the tips for China’s successful development. The result of long-term institutional changes of streamlining administration and delegating power is the division and institutionalization of the powers between the central and local governments, thus forming the check on power between the central and local governments to some extent.
- (d) **The Check on Power Among the Parties.** The multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the CPC is China’s political

party system. Since the reform and opening up, the actual political role of the democratic parties other than the Communist Party of China has been improved, and the increasingly institutionalized political consultation has played a practical role. Political consultation among the political parties is actually a process of power check practice to a certain extent.

8.1.2 Governance Ability Improvement

Since the reform and opening up, with the constant progress in industrialization and modernization, China's economic and social structures have also undergone extensive and profound changes, social interests are increasingly pluralistic and diverse and the international environment and situation have also undergone historic changes. As the leading force at the core of China's modernization drive, the Communist Party of China also faces a series of very complex situations and tough challenges in practice and theory. At the beginning of the new century, President Jiang Zemin clearly pointed out the issues such as the correct attitude towards Marxism, the transition from a revolutionary party to a ruling party, the Party's "two vanguards" and reinforcing the Party's class foundation and expanding its mass base (Jiang Zemin 2006b, p. 439). These developments and changes set new requirements for the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government as well as the Party and government leaders at all levels, requiring that the regime leading the modernization drive and ruling the world's largest population and the Party and government officials at all levels should have a more complete ruling ability. The driving factors behind the improvement of the ability of the ruling regime and officials are the political system and political reform, and the foundation for improving the ruling ability is the political system and the adaptability of the political system to the new social environments.

Since the reform and opening up, the political process to promote political reform and democratic institution building so as to improve the ability to govern is mainly reflected in three aspects:

(a) Promoting the Administrative Reform to Improve Efficiency and Reduce Cost

The political system and administrative system before China's reform launched were formed to meet the needs of the planned economy. In a market economy, the political system and administrative system should be reformed and transformed. Since the reform and opening up, China has conducted four rounds of administrative reform. In the initial stage of the administrative reform, the primary task is to streamline administration and delegate power to lower levels, and in the later stage, the primary task is to reduce administrative costs. China's national conditions and basic political system decide that the state should play an irreplaceable role in the economic and social development. The establishment of China's market economic system is largely driven by the government. After the establishment of the socialist market economic system, the government is still shouldering the important functions

of macro-regulation and public services. The effective combination of the market mechanism and the role of government enable China's economic development to achieve a sustained steady and rapid growth.

However, with the passage of time, enormous new situations, problems and contradictions have emerged with respect to the roles of government and the macro-control mechanism, among which high administrative costs are a symbolic and external prominent reflection of all problems and contradictions. The Chinese governments at all levels shoulder many functions in public security management and services, including promoting economic and social development, maintaining social orders and safeguarding public security, and while ensuring effective governance, the administrative costs are also rising. In particular, the phenomenon of "Keeping Safe with Money" has even appeared in the increasingly important work of "maintaining steady economic growth". For a long time, the public spending of the local governments rely heavily on their extra-budgetary revenues, and half of the spending of some local governments should rely on the "incomes generated by themselves", thus giving rise to a series of serious problems with potential risks such as "land finance". High administrative costs and local government's heavy financial burden are related to the government functions. To ease the burdens on the governments and reduce administrative costs, the most essential solution is to rely on reform. To improve the governance efficiency and reduce administrative costs, plenty of attempts at reform were made at the central and local levels, and some of these attempts were gradually transformed into new institutional mechanisms. At the central level, they are mainly reflected as the rationalization of the relationship between the government and the market and the expansion of the role of the market in resource allocation through reform. At the local level, they are reflected as the expansion of the duties and roles of grassroots-level self-governing and social self-governing organizations in social development and grassroots-level social management.

(b) Reforming the Governance and Social Management Systems at the Grassroots Level to Meet People's Demands for Rights and Interests

The foundation of the concept of democracy is a growing awareness of rights. Since the reform and opening up, the Chinese people's awareness of rights is growing. The transition from a planned economy to a market economy has brought profound changes in economic and social structures, and the interest relations among the people of different classes and strata have also undergone changes. The growing awareness of rights and changes in interest relations have subjectively and objectively given rise to enormous new social contradictions and conflicts among different interest groups. Conflicts between rich and poor people, conflicts between employers and employees, conflicts between rural and urban areas and conflicts arising from regional gaps have become major social conflicts in contemporary China. Meanwhile, under China's political system, various social conflicts are showing signs of converging towards the regime, which is a characteristic of Chinese politics. A distinctive advantage of China's social system is its ability to "concentrate resources to accomplish large undertakings", while the other side of this advan-

tage is: various social conflicts tend to converge towards the ruling party and the government and form the so-called “conflicts between officials and the public”.

A growing awareness of rights, increasing social conflicts and their tendency to converge towards the regime are the driving factors for political participation in the new era, which requires the response from China's political system and have formed the demands for institutional supply and the practical needs for political reform and development of democratic politics, particularly the grassroots-level democracy. The 10 years and more after entering the new century is a rapid growth period for China's responsive institutional reform, which is mainly reflected in the following aspects: social conflicts occurred directly at grassroots level and extensive institutional reforms and innovations were made in social governance, self-governance and democratic management at grassroots level as well as the work of Party building at grassroots level to meet people's demands for interests, give more rights to people at grassroots level, maintain social stability and improve social governance at grassroots level.

(c) Reforming the Decision-Making System, Promoting Scientific Decision-Making through Democratic Decision-Making and Establishing the Systems and Mechanisms Including Social Demands

The widespread and profound changes in the social and economic structures, the increasingly complicated social relations and the growing social conflicts have set increasingly stricter standards and requirements for the ability and level of social governance and management. In this context, accepting social demands and improving the balance of interests and inclusiveness of policies in social governance through extensive social consultations has become the main driving force of the decision-making system for reform. The practices in this aspect are mainly reflected in the institutional reform in the fields of political consultation and public affairs consultation.

In 1992, at the 14th CPC National Congress, President Jiang Zemin identified for the first time scientific and democratic decision-making as a primary task of socialist democratic politics construction. The report of the 14th CPC National Congress stated that: “the leading organs and leading cadres should listen carefully to the opinions of the masses, give full play to the roles of all experts and research advisory bodies to accelerate the establishment of a democratic and scientific decision-making system” (Jiang Zemin 2006c, p. 236). Since the 14th CPC National Congress, in the reform explorations to establish political and policy consultations at different levels and in different forms, China's Party and government decision-making systems have undergone profound changes, which led to a series of reforms and changes in the political system. The institutional reform originating from the democratic decision-making orientation launched in the 1990s is mainly reflected in the following aspects: openly soliciting opinions from the general public in legislation, establishing and improving the political consultation system, soliciting public opinions concerning major policies or decisions, establishing the hearing system for public affairs, establishing the expert and research institute consulting system for laws and policies and so on.

8.1.3 *The Need to Combat Corruption and Build a Clear Government*

The economic base determines the superstructure. Since the reform and opening up, the economic base of the Chinese society has undergone profound changes, and China has transformed itself from a planned economy to a socialist market economy. Significant changes in the economic base have profoundly affected the political and administrative systems. The influence of the factors of market economy on China's political system and democratic political construction are two-sided. On the one hand, a market economy has promoted the development of political democracy, which is mainly reflected in the institutional demands for political reform and democratic political construction due to a growing awareness of rights and the formation of a diversified interest pattern; but on the other hand, the factors of market economy also have a negative effect on the socialist democratic politics. This negative effect is mainly reflected in two aspects: first, the factors of market economy lead to social differentiation and economic inequality, while economic equality is exactly the material basis of socialist democratic politics. The problems in this aspect have been gradually exposed in social life in China. There are distinctive differences between the wealthy class and ordinary people in their demands for interests, their desire and ability to participate in political affairs and other aspects. Second, the factors of market economy have a corrosive effect on power. A market economy is a monetary economy. Based on the historical experience of development of human society, a commodity economy provides direct incentives for power corruption while currency exchange is the most direct and important concrete condition for corruption. In the Chinese history, the monetization of silver was the direct cause for the prevalence of official corruption in the Ming and Qing Dynasties and formed a qualitative transformation in the corruption history.

Since the reform and opening up, with the growth and spread of corruption, the battle to combat corruption is constantly evolving, and fighting corruption and upholding integrity have in turn further promoted institutional reform and system building. Since the reform and opening up, the institutional reform and system building driven by fighting corruption and upholding integrity are mainly reflected in three areas:

(a) *Advancing the Reform of the Cadre and Personnel System of the Party and Government*

The reform of the Party and government cadre and personnel system is the core content of China's political reform. For many years, fighting corruption and upholding integrity, as an intrinsic motive force, have promoted the reform of the Party and government cadre systems, mainly including establishing the civil service system, the Party and government cadre selection, appointment and management supervision system and the Party and government cadre avoidance, communication and tenure system and comprehensively implementing the cadre management procedures such as democratic recommendation and assessment, public opinion polls,

public announcement before appointment and post-leaving auditing. Since the reform and opening up, a series of laws and regulations, codes of conduct and ethical rules have been issued to promote the reform of the Party and government cadre and personnel system, including the *Civil Servant Law*, *Guidelines of the Communist Party of China for Party-member Leading Cadres to Perform Official Duties with Integrity*, *Guidelines for Deepening the Reform of the Cadre and Personnel System*, *Regulations on the Work of Selecting and Appointing Leading Party and Government Cadres*, *Supervisory Measures for the Selection and Appointment of Leading Party and Government Cadres (Trial)* and *Accountability Measures for the Selection and Appointment of Leading Party and Government Cadres (Trial)*. Thus the CPC has drawn up a comprehensive plan for reforming the cadre and personnel system, made rigorous stipulations regarding basic principles, standards, procedures and methods for the selection and appointment of cadres and tightened oversight over the work of cadre selection and appointment.

(b) Deepening the Reform of Government Management, Which Focuses on the Reform of the Administrative Examination and Approval System

The core issue of fighting corruption and upholding integrity is to prevent and reduce the conflicts of interest between the government and the Party and governmental cadres at all levels in economic and social management. The key to preventing and reducing conflicts of interest is to properly handle the relationship between government regulation and the market economy and comprehensively and systematically regulate the management behaviors of the government, which focuses on promoting the reform of the administrative examination and approval system and speeding up the separation of the functions of the government from those of enterprises, state assets management authorities, public institutions and market-based intermediaries to accelerate the transformation of the functions of the government. Since the reform of the administrative examination and approval system was launched in 2001, various departments under the State Council have canceled and adjusted over 2000 items requiring administrative examination and approval, and the local governments at all levels have cancelled and adjusted in total over 77,000 items which used to come under this heading. The two numbers of items added up to over half of the former total of such items. As for the rest of the items, administrative service centers have been established extensively to openly examine and approve them, an electronic monitoring system has been established to promptly monitor such examination and approval and an accountability system and an information feedback mechanism have been established to enhance the work efficiency and reduce the possibility of rent-seeking act or power.

(c) Deepening the Reform of the Judicial System

The judicial system is an important part of the political system, and the reform of the judicial system is the main content of political reform. The establishment of a sound judicial system is to meet the practical needs of fighting corruption and upholding integrity and a symbol of the development of democratic politics. Since the reform and opening up, China has identified the objectives of its judicial reform

as to uphold and improve the socialist legal system with China's characteristics to ensure that judicial and procuratorial organs exercise judicial and prosecutorial power independently and impartially in accordance with law (Hu Jintao 2012, p. 25). To this end, in accordance with the principles of scientifically allocating the power of investigation, supervisory power, adjudicative power and enforcement power, China has promulgated a series of laws and regulations over the past years to strengthen oversight on judicial activities, regulate the exercise of discretionary power by judicial officials and establish the accountability system for those enforcing the law wrongly and acting against law and discipline to ensure judicial justice, including establishing and implementing a series of concrete systems to promote judicial democracy and openness, such as the open trial system, people's jury system, people's supervisor system, lawyer system, legal aid system and people's mediation system.

In the 30 years and more of reform and opening up, the root causes for promoting China's political reform and democratic political construction were not in people's ideology. Undoubtedly, ideology has some influence on political development, but what really affects the political system and drives political development are the practical needs to maintain the existence and development of the political system. Specifically, the most important objective factors promoting China's political reform and democratic political development are no other than the practical needs to tighten self-check and balance of political power, improve the ability to govern and uphold political integrity under the background of implementation of the socialist market economy and growing people's awareness of their rights. These three needs are the real driving forces for the political reform and democratic political construction in contemporary Chinese and the basis to understand and predict the future trend of China's political reform and democratic political construction.

8.2 Three Strategies to Promote Democratic Development in China

Continuously promoting democratic development is an intrinsic need of China to achieve industrialization and modernization. In future, China will continue to explore and develop a democratic political system with its own characteristics. Judging from past experience, in the historical period of industrialization, modernization and social restructuring, party and parliamentary politics based on competitive elections is not an appropriate and effective political system and mechanism. Given China's historical and national conditions, stage of social development and real tasks, it is predictable that China will not choose to develop and expand the competitive political systems as its future direction and path for democratic political development, including the introduction of competitive elections and further expansion of grassroots elections that have been implemented for many years. At the current stage, China's social conditions are not suitable for the development of

competitive forms of democracy, and the primary task the state and society are facing is still economic development. The task and function in line with economic development are still to forge public consensus and keep the people fully motivated in production and construction.

At the current stage, to promote China's political reform and democratic political construction, we should expand the orderly political participation at different levels, expand the scope of consultative democracy, improve the quality of consultative democracy, establish the system for check and balance of power and promote the development of the three basic strategies for democratic oversight and so on.

8.2.1 Expanding the Orderly Political Participation at Different Levels

Political participation is an important part of democratic politics. Political participation plays an important role in China's democratic political practice and is an important way for people to achieve their democratic rights as masters of the country under the leadership of the CPC. There are a variety of ways for political participation in China, one of which is democratic election, but policy participation is a major form of political participation. That is, the formation of laws and policies is based on soliciting public opinions and reflecting the wishes of the people. Through soliciting the wishes of the people, the Party's ruling strategies and the laws, regulations and policies of governments at all levels can accurately reflect and represent the fundamental interests of the people of all nationalities. Since the reform and opening up, China has established a relatively complete system for reflecting and soliciting public opinions, mainly covering transparency of government operations, democratic decision-making, policy assessment and other basic links as well as a series of concrete systems in legislation and important decision-making processes such as public announcement, hearing, expert argumentation, technical consultation and soliciting opinions openly. China's public opinion solicitation system has been gradually standardized and legalized. For example, *the Implementation Guidelines on Overall Promotion of Administration by Law* formulated by the State Council has established the administrative decision-making mechanism of the Chinese government that is characterized by "combining public participation, expert argumentation and government decision".

In China's actual social conditions, an important guarantee for political participation is to maintain orderly political participation. Disorderly political participation had left over a serious lesson in the history of China's democratic political practice. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao Zedong said to Young Students that, "You should be concerned about national affairs and wage the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution to the end." The implementation of "great democracy" resulted in a big chaos of the society. From the perspective of political participation, the mistake of the Cultural Revolution lies in disorderly political participation of people

rather than “people’s concern about the national affairs”. The disorderly political participation in the Cultural Revolution is reflected in two aspects: first, the incorrect mode and procedures of participation; second, lack of hierarchy in participation. In the Cultural Revolution, the masses, especially the young students, were called on to participate in the political life of the country mainly through “speaking out freely, airing views fully, writing big-character posters and holding great debates”. This form of involvement was soon evolved into a controversy and strife among groups of masses with different opinions and into populist political participation. Facts have proved that populist political participation is invalid and can only divide the people and create conflicts. Lack of hierarchy is another serious problem with the political participation in the Cultural Revolution. In populist politics, a mass campaign was endowed with truth, and the masses have the rights to get involved in political life of the country at all levels. In the Cultural Revolution, political participation was ultimately expressed as “the working class occupies the superstructure”. The populist political participation in the Cultural Revolution tells people from the negative side: efficient and orderly political participation must be hierarchical. This is an important experience.

Under China’s current conditions, hierarchical political participation is the key to ensure orderly political participation. A basic relationship to be dealt with in a modern form of democracy, i.e. indirect democratic politics, is the relationship between “the elites” and “the masses”. In any form of democracy, people, especially the overwhelming majority of the general public, must have the rights to participate in politics, but the point is how to participate in politics. Asymmetric information and experiences and limitations of interests objectively restrict the scope and ability of people’s political participation, which should be taken into consideration when it comes to the issues of democracy and political participation.

Hierarchical political participation is a correct way for the general public to achieve orderly political participation. The principle of hierarchical political participation should be to achieve political participation according to interest relevance, information adequacy and joint responsibility. As asymmetric information and experiences and limitations of interests exist objectively, there should be various levels of political participation. That is to say, it is necessary to distinguish between different political affairs, guide groups and representatives with strong correlation to different levels of political participation based on relevance of direct interests, extent of information grasping and extent of joint responsibility, while groups with more indirect interests, less information and unobvious results, in principle, should not participate. Adhering to the principle of interest relevance, information sufficiency and joint responsibility can ensure people’s rights to participate in political life on the whole and prevent the invalid and disorder participation.

Expanding orderly political participation is a task of top priority in China’s democratic political construction and political reform at present and in the future period and an area needing to vigorously explore. Expanding political participation helps mobilize the enthusiasm of the broad masses of the people, reflect public opinions and promote democratic decision-making. But in a period with frequent occurrence of social conflicts, political participation also has the potential

risk to trigger social conflicts and is also likely to aggravate instability while providing support to the political system. These should be addressed through constant practice and exploration. At present and in the future period, there is still huge room for development in establishing and improving the mode of political participation suiting China's national conditions and accumulating the experience in hierarchical political participation.

8.2.2 Expanding the Scope and Improving the Quality of Consultative Democracy

At the 18th CPC National Congress, socialist consultative democracy was reiterated, improving its institutions and work mechanisms and promoting its extensive, multilevel and institutionalized development is proposed as the objectives of reform, and socialist consultative democracy is seen as a task of top priority in the development of socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics at present and in the future period. Consultative democracy is a tradition and advantage in China's contemporary politics. Compared with competitive elections, political consultation is conducive to coordination and integration of interests of different stakeholders and help eliminate differences and oppositions among stakeholders and form and achieve overall social interests. Especially in a country in a transition period whose relations of social interests are changing rapidly and economic and social structures are changing constantly in the industrialization and modernization processes, political consultation is an appropriate and favorable form of democracy.

The multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the CPC is China's political party system. The multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the CPC, particularly the National People's Political Consultative Conference, is a product of China's New Democratic Revolution, and it has also absorbed and inherited the beneficial ingredients of traditional Chinese political civilization and is a creation of the socialist democratic political system with Chinese characteristics. Practices have proved that the multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the CPC is a successful system that should continue to be upheld and carried forward. However, the political consultation mechanism in China's democratic politics is far beyond the scope of the multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC. Political consultation is a widely used basic form of China's democratic political practice, and political consultation exists not only at the national level but also in democratic self-governance at the grassroots level. For example, the "Democratic Deliberation" in Wenling, Zhejiang province, is a good form of democratic consultation created by people in the grassroots-level democratic practice.

As China's basic strategy and important direction for the development of democratic politics in future, consultative democracy should be expanded to admit a wider range of issues and institutionalized. In the Western democratic political sys-

tems, the separation and balance of powers as a principle of democratic politics is reflected in all aspects of the Western political systems, such as the “Separation of the Three Powers (executive, legislative and judicial)” and check and balance of powers among the organs of political power at the state level; the separation and check of powers between elected politicians and professional executors or the so-called “politicians” and “bureaucrats” among the power holders; the separation of powers and responsibilities between the state and local organs of power in the federal system; the so-called “state” and “society” in social management, which is in essence the separation of powers and responsibilities between the government and autonomous organizations. China’s consultative democracy should also be widely extended to all areas of social and political life, and political consultation, as a general institutionalized formation and coordination mechanism for laws and policies, has become the core principle of China’s democratic politics.

Improving the quality of consultative democracy is a key issue in the future development of China’s consultative democracy. At present, the related supporting systems and measures in China to implement consultative democracy also need to be continuously improved. In future development of Chinese-style consultative democracy, the mechanism for objectively, accurately and comprehensively identifying and reporting social conditions and public opinions should be an important related system for the development of consultative democracy and should be included in the agenda for construction of China’s democratic politics. Compared with electoral democracy, consultative democracy is relatively imperfect in its expression mechanism, so in the context of focusing on the development of consultative democracy, it is absolutely necessary to accelerate the establishment of the system for investigating the social conditions and public opinions in China. There exist flaws in the current survey work for public opinions in China, and a professional, systematic and sound public opinion survey system has not yet established, so the foundation for consultative democracy is not strong enough. In this regard, China should learn extensively from relevant foreign experience, accelerate to establish and improve the public opinion survey organizations and systems based on the national conditions and practical needs.

8.2.3 Establishing the System for Check and Balance of Powers and Developing Democratic Oversight

In the condition that the basic policy for the development of democratic politics in the current stage is not to expand competitive elections, power check and democratic oversight will inevitably have a more important position and role.

Check and balance of powers is one of the core contents of the Western political theories and political systems. Long-term practices show that check and balance of powers, as a basic measure to prevent a power from degenerating and protect the nature of power, is effective and reliable. Check and balance of powers is an outstanding achievement of political civilization of mankind and a generally applicable

principle in a democratic political system. The basic principle of check and balance of powers is mutual check and oversight on power among the same or similar subjects of power, while the basic principle of democratic oversight is the check and oversight on the entrusting parties and agents by the authorizers and subjects represented. Check and balance of powers and democratic oversight are two management mechanisms for check and oversight on political power with different natures but similar functions. However, check and balance of powers and democratic oversight and the relationship between them has long been in a fuzzy state in the socialist political practices and democratic political construction and has not been clearly understood in theory or consciously promoted or implemented in practice. In the early USSR's socialist political practice, Lenin advocated that the regime of socialist countries should implement the "unity of legislature and administration". In *The State and Revolution* written by Lenin on the eve of the October Revolution, Lenin very appreciated Marx's proposition on cancelling the parliament and implementing the unity of legislature and administration when summarizing the revolutionary experience of the Paris Commune in 1871. In particular, he cited what Marx said, "Marx wrote: 'The Commune, was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time'" (Lenin 1995a, p. 149). The abolition of parliamentarism and the unity of legislature and administration mean a change in separation and check and balance of legislative and executive powers in the capitalist democratic political practice. This is an important idea about the socialist political system of the classical Marxist writers, so to speak.

In the early years when the USSR, China and other socialist countries were founded, they indeed attempted to establish and implement a political system characterized by the unity of legislature and administration as envisaged by Marx. But the practical results show that the unity of legislature and administration was difficult to achieve in practice. First, due to differences in powers and functions, it was difficult for an organ to exercise the legislative and executive powers simultaneously. Second, the unity of legislative and executive powers naturally led to abolition of check and balance of the two powers, while it was very difficult to exercise oversight over a large authority. Shortly after the October Revolution, Lenin realized from the initial ruling practice that the unity of legislature and administration was actually impractical, and the organ of supreme power that decided the laws and policies and the executive organ responsible for implementation had a natural tendency to separate. Lenin stated in the article *How We Should Reorganize the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection* that the plenary session of the Party Central Committee showed a trend of developing into the supreme delegate meeting of the Party, while the routine work was handled by the Political Bureau and the secretariat. Regarding the issue of how to restrict and supervise the Party and state organs, after the October Revolution, the main measures taken by the Communist Party of Russia and Lenin included: establishing a supervisory organ represented by the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection consisting of outstanding workers and peasants at grassroots level to supervise the Party and government. But the effect of this direct supervision was poor, which was described by Lenin as a big problem (Lenin 1995b, pp. 779–783). In fact, the workers' and peasants' inspection system was eventually abolished.

Practices show that check and balance of powers and democratic oversight belong to two different categories, with differences in their subjects, objects, methods and other aspects. Check and balance of powers belongs to check and oversight inside the power system and forms the mutual check and oversight role and effect through rational separation of powers. This kind of check and oversight is inside the power system and can more effectively act on the formation process of law and policy to prevent alienation and abuse of power. As the check and oversight inside the power system, check and balance of powers is more professional. Democratic oversight is the check and oversight outside the power system and is exercise by an authorized body in varying degrees and through different ways, which is generally known as “social supervision”, “public supervision” or “public opinion” in China. In the USSR and Russia at that time, democratic oversight came in the form of direct supervision represented by the workers’ and peasants’ inspection. Democratic oversight is from outside the power system, and it is different from the supervision inside the power system in types of supervision. Practices prove that it is not suitable for check and oversight to be effected in the process of exercise of power but more suitable to be effected on the results of exercise of power and on the conducts of the organs of power and power holders because democratic oversight has different subject, different position, the problems in information symmetry and different orientation of demands for interests.

Power should be exercised within the cage of regulations. This is a popular saying of check and balance of powers. China’s long-term practice of political development and democratic political construction finally enables us to distinguish the check and balance of powers from democratic oversight. More importantly, recognizing the value of check and balance of powers is a significant advancement. Distinguishing the check and balance of powers from democratic oversight is an important prerequisite and foundation for China’s democratic political construction and political reform in future; distinguishing the check and balance of powers from democratic oversight helps more scientifically and effectively restrict and supervise powers.

In selecting and building the political system covering check and balance of powers and democratic oversight, we should take into consideration the periodical characteristics and needs of economic and social development and China’s national conditions and base ourselves on actual conditions. China is still in the primary stage of socialism and will long remain so. This is the fundamental element of the basic condition of China. In the primary stage of socialism, the primary task of the state and society is to develop the productive forces. As a great power, China must also catch up with the world advanced level, and only in this way can we have ability to make the Chinese nation stand rock-firm in the family of nations. Therefore, to ensure the fulfillment of China’s primary

development task and safeguard its core interests, China's political power system will be political system with a high degree of concentration in the foreseeable future, and China will not adopt the democratic development strategy with competitive elections as a major form in the foreseeable future. Therefore, China's system of check and balance of power is not now and will never be the Western-style system of separation and balance of powers of the so-called "Separation of the Three Powers" type, the leadership position of the Communist Party of China decides the centralization and unity of China's supreme decision-making power. However, under the premise of ensuring the leadership position of the Communist Party of China, the power check mechanism can still be developed inside China's political power system. In fact, the power check and balance mechanism actually exists currently inside China's power system.

Yueqing City in Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province, started implementing the people's hearing system in 2007, which is a typical local system for power check and political oversight at grassroots level in China. In April 2007, the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Yueqing City first implemented on a trial basis the practice in which the deputies to the Municipal People's Congress, citizen listeners, members of the presidiums of Township People's Congress and staff of government organs were invited to listen to the work reports by the deputy majors related to "the people's government, the people's court and the people's procuratorate" on education, environmental protection, urban construction, transportation, social security and so on during the meeting of the Standing Committee in the form of a thematic meeting. The deputies to the Municipal People's Congress and the citizen listeners aired their views on the reports. The contents of the speeches given by them at the hearings were summarized and collated by the People's Congress to form the written comments and then communicated to the municipal government after being discussed at the meeting of directors. The whole process of the hearing was broadcast live via the Internet and TV media. In August 2008, the People's Congress of Yueqing City promulgated the provisional regulations on the ways for people's hearing and consultation, and the people's hearing system thus became a regular system of the People's Congress of Yueqing City. The combination of people's hearing with the supervision of the people's congress has further strengthened the check on the executive power, further improved the supervision of the people's congress on the party and government organs and officials, promoted the building of the government under rule of law and expanded citizens' orderly political participation. Presently, a wide range of democratic supervisory measures are being vigorously promoted in many places throughout the country. This is one aspect of China's future political development, and it is driving the check on power and political oversight in China's future political system and is an important growth point in China's democratic politics.



The people's hearing held by the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Yueqing City, Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province

In the future political reform in China, the building of power check mechanism will be promoted inevitably through establishing the power check mechanisms in different categories, at different levels and in different grades. The so-called “different categories” is to first establish a sound power check mechanism inside the major organs of power such as the Party committee, the government, the people's congress and the judiciary. The so-called “different levels” is to establish the power check and balance mechanisms with distinctive characteristics at the central, local and departmental levels in accordance with the conditions and needs. As for the so-called “different grades”, due to China's current stage of development and the historical restriction of the political system in the current development stage, China's political power has long been relatively concentrated, so the power check and balance mechanisms in China's political system are not balanced and homogeneous, and the power check and balance mechanisms at different levels are different. The mechanisms and extents of check and balance of powers for the supreme and core powers are different from those at the other levels.

In the forms of democracy in absence of competitive elections, the status and role of democratic oversight is more prominent, which is an important manifestation of the exercise of democratic rights by the people. Particularly, under the socialist market economy in China, democratic oversight, as an important form of democracy, is indispensable. Democratic oversight is the fundamental method to ensure that the powers bestowed on the ruling Party, the organs of state power and government agencies by the people are not deteriorated and that the government must function

by the mandate of the people and work for the well-being of the people. In a certain sense, democratic oversight is a key factor in keeping China's current democratic political development on the rights track. Only by implementing effective democratic oversight can other forms of democracy be truly effective. In addition, only by implementing and strengthening effective democratic oversight can the nature of China's socialist democratic politics be truly realized. Therefore, democratic oversight is an important area needs to be vigorously strengthened in the building of socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics at the current stage.

References

- Deng Xiaoping. (1983). On the reform of the system of party and state leadership. In *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* (Vol. 2). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Deng Xiaoping. (1993). On the reform of political system. In *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*. Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Hu Jintao. (2012). Firmly March on the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and strive to complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects. In *A collection of documents of the 18th CPC national congress*. Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Jiang Zemin. (2005). Building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and create a new situation in building socialism with Chinese characteristics. In *Selection of important documents since the 16th CPC national congress* (Vol. 1). Beijing: The Central Literature Publishing House.
- Jiang Zemin. (2006a). Strengthen our efforts to promote clean government and combat corruption. In *Selected works of Jiang Zemin* (Vol. 3). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Jiang Zemin. (2006b). Instructions on the drafting of the report of the 16th CPC national congress. In *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin* (Vol. 3). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Jiang Zemin. (2006c). Accelerate the pace of reform, opening up and modernization drive to win a greater victory in the cause of the socialism with Chinese characteristics. In *Selected works of Jiang Zemin* (Vol. 1). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Lenin. (1995a). The state and revolution. In *Selected works of Lenin* (Vol. 3). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Lenin. (1995b). How we should reorganize the workers' and peasants' inspection. In *Selected Works of Lenin* (Vol. 3). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.
- Marx, K. (1995). The civil war in France. In *Selected works of Marx and Engels* (Vol. 3). Beijing: The People's Publishing House.